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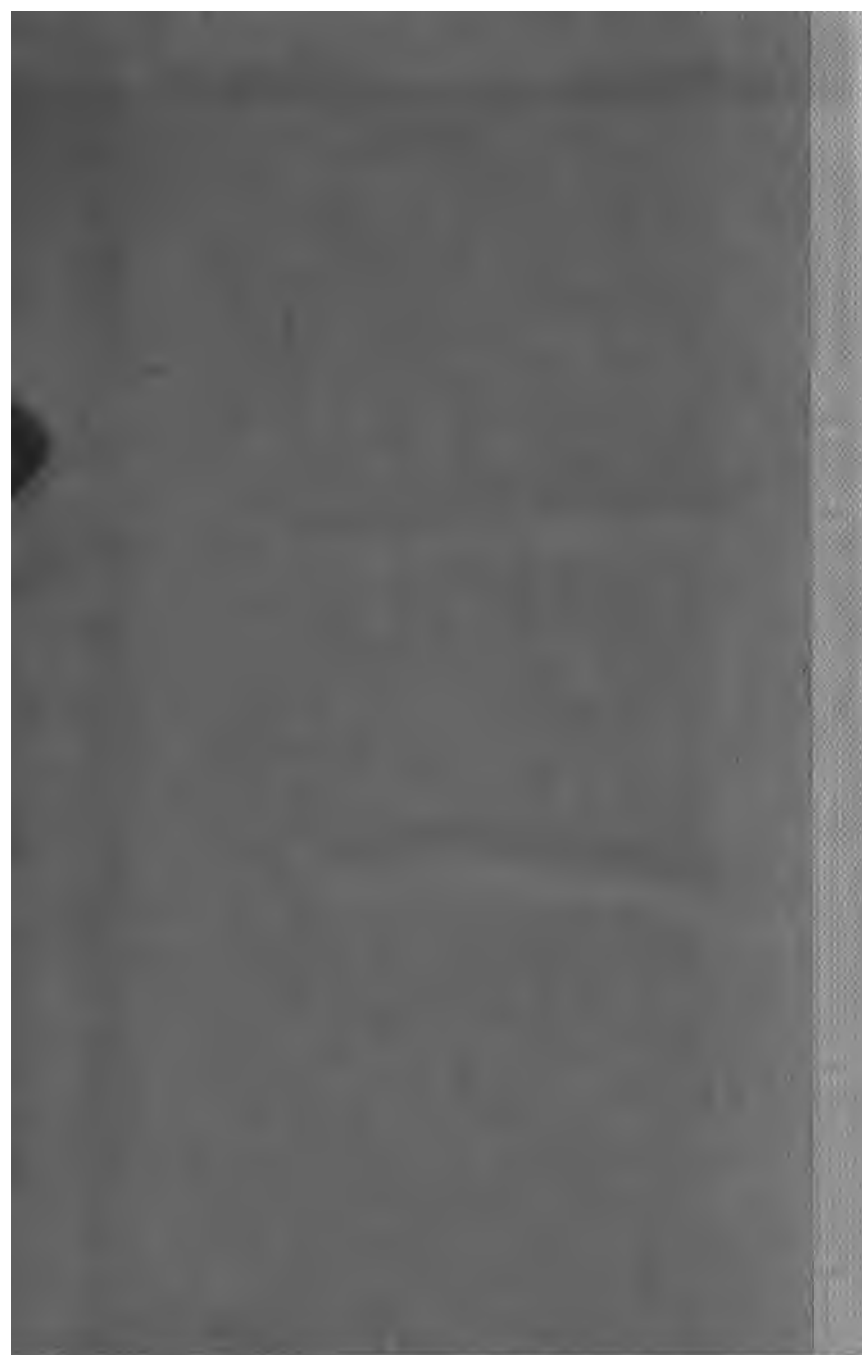
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**VOL. CCCXI.**

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**PETER PRIGGINS,**  
**THE COLLEGE SCOUT.**



1807  
6.  
**PETER PRIGGINS,**

THE  
**COLLEGE SCOUT.**

*by Joseph Theodore Hook*  
EDITED BY

**THEODORE HOOK, Esq.**



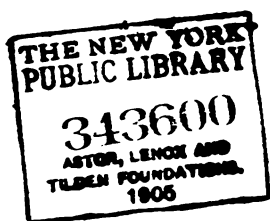
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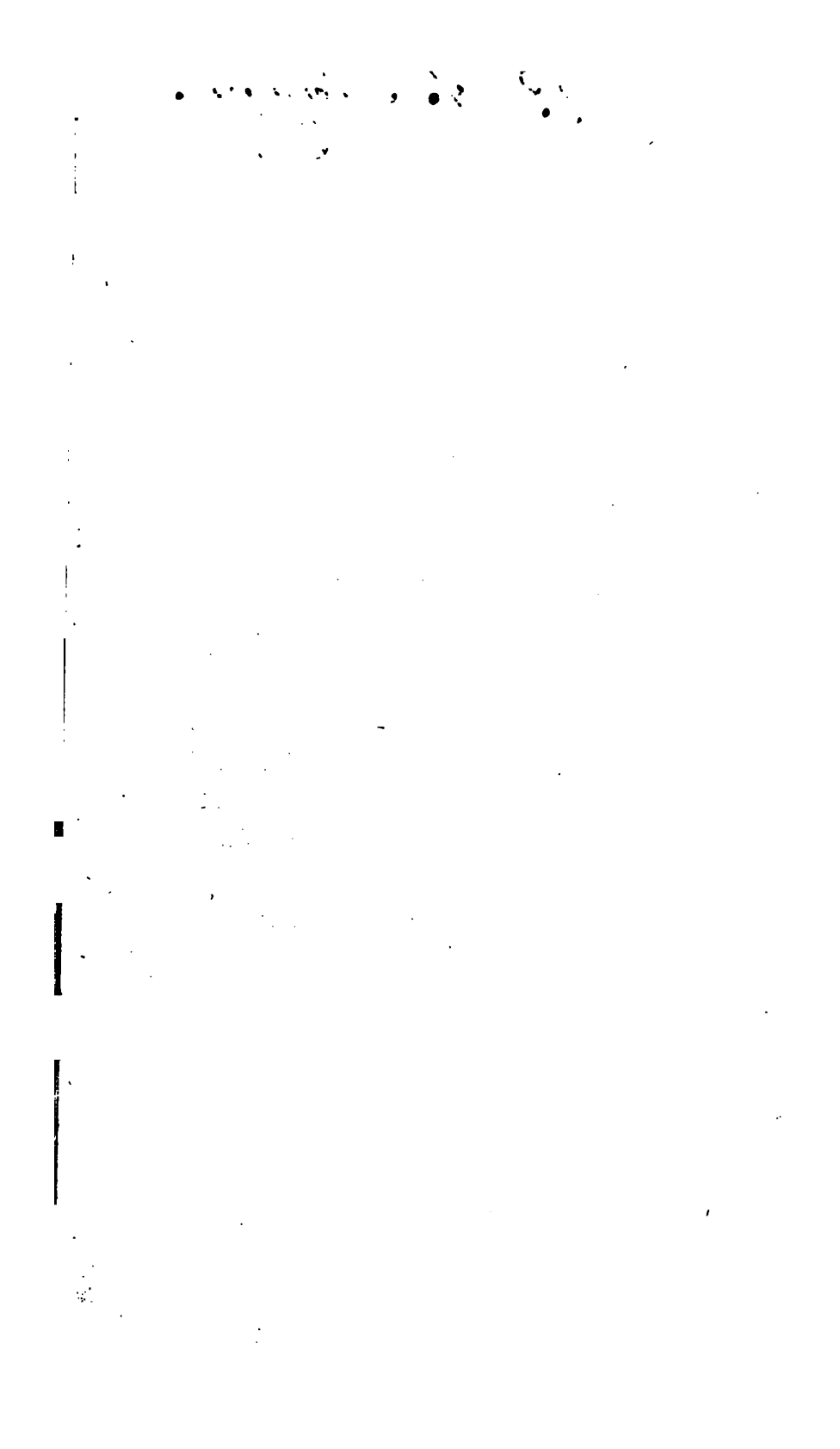
THE greater portion of the following work has appeared in the *New Monthly Magazine*. When the first paper of the series was submitted to me, I was satisfied that the talents of the writer would be duly appreciated by the Public, and his reputation proportionably increased. It appears that I was not mistaken. Each succeeding chapter has improved in power and attraction; and I feel great pleasure in putting them before the reader in their present collected form, perfectly sure that a further acquaintance with their merits will induce a fresh call upon the genius and ability of the Author, who is not likely upon a future occasion to discredit the reputation which he has so justly and meritoriously obtained in the present instance.

T. E. H.

MAY 27 1905

ATHENÆUM,  
December 17, 1840.

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Mrs. G. A. Morgan

# PETER PRIGGINS.

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## CHAPTER I.

I AM not vain enough in my old age to fancy that any body, except my own family, out of St. Peter's College, Oxford, cares one thing about the sort of life that I, Peter Priggins, have led for nearly seventy years; though some people, either from curiosity, because they have nothing better to do, are always poking their noses into other people's concerns, instead of reserving them for their legitimate uses—snuff and pocket-handkerchiefs; for I do not reckon the pulling of a man's nose out of his face, for having introduced you, putting that nose of his to a *legitimate* use. A nose, in my opinion, was never intended to be manipulated, except through the medium of a Bandana.

Some impertinent people might, therefore, be inclined to ask why Peter Priggins, forced myself upon the stage of life for public pection; like a patent grometer, or any other new article of vry; and, however irrelevant the query may seem to decent members of society, I think—at least I feel that I ought to think—it unbecoming of me to answer it.

My reasons then for publishing my "life and times" are these: in the first place, for my own amusement and to gratify—I don't conceal it—that vanity to which, as an Oxford man, I have a right to claim. After spending all my *best* days—that is, the days when I was *worst* off—in the service of my college, its members have kindly secured my *otium cum dignitate*, by the weekly donation—contribution would be more collegiate—of one pound one; this, together with the savings from my many years' peculium, and those little scrapings unknown to all but the fraternity of scouts or gyps, the Cambridge men call them, enable me to have daily my "pint of wine and a candle;" and as I crack my nuts and my jokes earnestly—a trick I learned from one of our Bursars—to think of the days when I was young," and speculate on the destiny of my "a light of other days," and wonder, and, as I am told, sometimes grumble at the mighty changes I have witnessed in my times" in Oxford.

But my principal motive—and a most disinterested one it must be allowed to be—is, by publishing some events that have occurred in

my times, to remove as much as possible of that ignorance which is observable every where *out* of Oxford, by allowing all those who can prove an alibi to have an insight into what goes on *in* Oxford; and, *but that's no one else's business but my own*, to apply the proceeds, if any, to "increase my little store and keep my sons" and daughters at home.

I could mention another reason for my boldness in going to press (I believe that's the crack term), and I think that reason a strong one. It is possible—possible I say, and grieved I am to say it—that Oxford may be annihilated, though *we*, of course, shall resist to the last; or, which is almost as bad, so thoroughly amalgamated by the in-pourings of our "dissenting brethren," which, I believe, is the correct designation of those psalm-singing individuals, that, like an "old friend with a new face," as I call my grandfather's watch with its new dial-plate, its former comely features may be entirely obliterated by this unsightly new epidermis of dissent. I give, therefore, the manuscript of my records of the "good old days," to be deposited in the ark of the university amongst other valuables; and lest, in troublous times, the hands of rude men should pollute and plunder that sacred chest—though they'll be puzzled to find it, because it "shape hath none,"—I would foil their base attempts to destroy my "lays of the olden time," by enabling the scattered myriads of Oxonians to keep each a copy in his own patent, fire-proof, unpickable-by-any-key-but-the-right iron chest; and my publisher justly observes, that no man ought to be without one copy at least.

Before I proceed any further, it may be necessary to explain to the reader who is amazed at my erudition that, though a scout and bedmaker, I am not an uneducated man; I am not at all inclined to doubt that the superiority of my language has astonished him, if he is not an Oxford man; but that, as I said before, is easily explained away *in* Oxford. How I acquired so much learning will appear hereafter.

"Quid Domini faciant audent cum talia *Fures*."

If scouts can write thus, what cannot their masters do? That's what we Oxford men call an induction. My father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, not omitting some of the collaterals, masculine and feminine, maternal and paternal, have all devoted their energies to promoting the comforts of the graduates and undergraduates of St. Peter's College for a century past or more; for, like the Medes of old, with us the son of a cook is brought up as a cook, and the son of a scout or bedmaker looks to succeed his father in the same profession. This rule does not apply to the offices of college butler or porter; they are always filled by the favourite butler and coachman of the head of the college, at the time the vacancy occurs. The height

of our ambition—I speak of the Priggins family—was the place of common-room man, and my father's portrait now decorates *our* common-room in consideration of fifty years' servitude in that capacity.

I was his deputy from the time his "hand forgot its cunning," after the twelfth bottle—for port wine was drunk in those days, and so were some of its drinkers;—but that's parenthetical—and tea was scarce then, if not unknown. As tea has cheapened, humbug has progressed.

My mother was fortunately a very pretty woman, and my father fell so suddenly and desperately in love with her one day on visiting the village where she dwelt, which was the favourite summer's residence of one of his masters, that he married her in less than a week, and was blessed with my appearance in rather less than seven months. The young squire did not forget his *protégée*, who had been lady's-maid at the Hall, and promised to provide for her first-born, if it proved a boy. Well! I *was* a boy, and reckoned more like the squire than my own mother's husband; and he, the squire, kept his word, for he sent mother half a bacon-hog, as a delicacy during her recovery; and me, a basket of cherries and plums, which being administered injudiciously, stones and all, had very nearly *provided* for me for ever.

I don't know how it was, but father never took to me so kindly as he did to the rest of his children; he hated my black hair and eyes, because his own were *vice versa*, which he construed "a horse of another colour;" and, in consequence, my mess was generally the reverse of Benjamin's, though my coat resembled Joseph's, being of many colours from numerous patchings.

Through the interest of our principal, I got an appointment as a chorister, and having a clear voice, and a good, though very eccentric singing-master, I soon became a pet with the men, both graduates and undergraduates; and many a good blow-out, as the Eton men say, have I got for singing a song or two—but more of this by and by. All went smoothly with me for a few years, and I got a tolerable smattering of Greek and Latin, considering the time I was obliged to devote to music and singing; but at last my voice was broken, and then my head, and at last my spirits, for I could not sing a note, and I was cast aside like a cracked flute by my former patrons. So I threw off my gown—set up my cap for a cockshy, and told the governor flatly and plainly I would be a scout and nothing else. He grumbled at first, but upon considering that as a parson, for he meant me to take orders, I might be lucky enough to get a chaplaincy of sixty or seventy pounds a year, and be obliged to buy my own clothes; whereas, as a bedmaker, at which dignity I had an excellent prospect of arriving, I should make my hundred and fifty pounds.

per annum, and be well clothed and fed, besides being enabled to put by a few little *et ceteras*.

I entered on my duties under my governor, and, since then, have never regretted my choice. I have been scout's boy—the dirtiest specimens of puerility to be found are those boys—scout, bedmaker, and common-room man, and in all these offices I have seen and heard a few things, which would *rather* astonish the world if they were divulged; but my grand principle through life has been “NEVER SPLIT.” I mean, as sayings and doings occur to me, to note those which may be published without hurting the feelings of any individual—without any order or arrangement. Like the Irish beggar, I sha'n't “wait to pick them, but take them as they come.”

I recollect one evening, as I was putting the third bottle of port on the common-room table, when the small party seated there seemed determined to be cozy, and have one bottle more and a rubber, their arrangements were suddenly and unexpectedly interrupted by the entrance of an individual, so thoroughly enveloped in great coats and handkerchiefs, that, until he unrolled himself like a mummy, we failed to recognize our Bursar. He had just returned from a journey, apparently tedious and disagreeable, and as it had been raining in earnest and those stinking Mackintoshes were not then invented, he was pretty well soaked through.

After he had changed his dripping garments, and stowed away a basin of warm soup and a glass or two of sherry, he joined the common-room party and made play at the port.

His remarks on the weather, the state of the roads, and his evident lowness of spirits, led the others to make inquiries as to the cause of his journey and his sudden return; and as his answer involved the fate of an old brother collegian, all idea of whist was given up for

#### THE BURSAR'S TALE.

“Peter,” said he to me, “remove the decanters and bring in the largest bowl filled with good egg-flip, for ere I get to the end of my tale, my hearers will require something consolatory, and so shall I.”

After tasting and signifying his approbation of my brewing, by a peculiar twinkle of the eye, which to me was masonic, he put his feet on the fender, and thus began :

Go where you will, you are sure to meet with some one whom you know, or by whom you are known; and take up any one of the *noomerous noowspapers*, (cocknice dictum) and the chances are that before you have skimmed it through—for no one *reads* a paper nowadays—you recognize some old friend or acquaintance as

having been buried, married, or in some other unpleasant predicament. To me the only pure enjoyment of the broad sheet is an accompaniment obligato to my matutinal mocha, over a good fire, *si hyems erit*, or with open casements, when Sirius rages. I feel primed then for the day, and ready to go off any where at a moment's notice. A few weeks since, when the papers were very dull, before the elections were even anticipated, and I was seeking solace amidst horrid murders, shocking suicides, and Platonic crim. cons., I was attracted by an article, copied from a Cornwall County Chronicle, which ran thus : — "Accident at sea—one man drowned—name unknown—boy—the only one on board—saved—but life almost extinct; further particulars in our next." In a few days afterwards, it was quite clear that some penny-a-liner had discovered the value of the "event that had just come off," and had exercised his verbosity on the occasion, or, in other words, "made the most of it." Compressing the column and half into plain English, I found that Mr. Heavysides, the county coroner, and twelve substantial yeomen, had sat for six hours on the body of one Samuel Smyth, who was drowned by the upsetting of his favourite yacht, the Merry-go-round, while sailing in the bay of Trevenny, on the coast of Cornwall, as was proved by the evidence of his servant, James Jobs, the *boy*, sixty years' old, who narrowly shared his master's fate, but was saved by squatting *classically* on the keel, like Bacchus on a beer-barrel. The only cause alleged was "want of ballast," and the verdict was, of course, "found drowned" on the man, and "overset" on the boat, which was accordingly very properly deodanded, and sold again immediately, to give Mr. Heavysides and his substantial jurymen another opportunity of resting his and their ponderous person and persons, by sitting on the unfortunate purchaser.

The name struck me. I had known a Sam Smyth of our College, intimately, some years ago, and I fancied it must be my old chum; but all my doubts on the subject were ended by the butler's boy, who next morning brought me a letter to this effect, as nearly as I can recollect.

"Reverend Sir,

"As sole executor and residuary legatee of Rev. Samuel Smyth, suddenly and accidentally deceased, we beg your earliest personal (if convenient) attendance at Trevenny, Cornwall, to settle matters in question.

"We have the honour to be, etc., etc.

"NIBSON AND INKSPOT,

"Attorneys-at-Law and Solicitors.

"To Rev. the Bursar,

"St. Peter's College, Oxon."



Pithy and pertinent, I thought; but thoughts, I thought again, would not satisfy Messrs. Nibson and Inkspot. I accordingly availed myself of a seat on the box of the Neck-or-Nothing opposition fast coach, and by great good luck, or rather, perhaps, by the doctrine of chances, as the Neck-or-Nothing had upset the day before, and killed "the best whip on the road, four outsides, and crippled an *in*," I arrived in safety at Trevenny, and, looking out for the largest red house in the town, with the largest brass-plate on a green door, of course found the domicilium of the solicitors, or, as they, eschewing common law, in common with all country lawyers, preferred being termed, conveyancers, a term their clients seldom hesitated bestowing on them at the end of each term, but especially at Christmas.

I gave a pretty considerable loud rat-tat at the green door, to let them know I was not come to a common lawyer's on common business, and was conged by a cringing crop-haired clerk into "the office," and informed that Mr. Nibson was just now *very particular* engaged with a client on *very particular* business, but would feel *particular* pleasure in waiting on me as soon as the *particular* consultation was over. Mr. Inkspot was gone into the country on *very particular* business; and Mr. Closecrop vanished *backwards*, with a wriggle and twist, and my card in his hand, like an eel in a wall, politely declining a sniggler's offer of a lobworm.

I endeavoured to amuse the interesting company in which I was left—my own—by reading the various titles on sundry tin boxes, painted raisin-fashion in Japanese, and conspicuously chalked with all the great names in the neighbourhood; and by walking to the windows, and returning the stares of the natives—a very primitive set. I admired the neat little church, and snug parsonage, as I supposed it was, just over the way; an edition of a house in 24mo., as compared with the quarto, with extra margin, and well gilt, of Messrs. Nibson and Inkspot; and was just beginning to philosophize on the enormous wealth of the established church, and her overpaid ministers, when the door opened suddenly, and admitted an homuncule, of about four feet three, very dapper in appearance, and over-obsequious in manner. His dress was anomalous; he wore round his neck, if neck it might be called, which was a mere point of junction between the head and shoulders, a skyblue stock, over which the cheeks crushed down a pair of rounded collars, worked at the edges; a rose-coloured dressing-gown, of some tarnished fabrique, and a suit of nankeen dittos—that is, unnameables and gaiters in continuation.

I afterwards learnt that Mr. Nibson's begetter had been confidential agent, steward, etc., etc., to the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Rentborough, who, from the badness of the times, and

other causes, was compelled to live abroad to retrench—that is, to spend all his income, and a little more, at Naples, or Florence, instead of at Trevenny Park. Nibson, sen., had already closed his accounts with his master here below, and had, luckily, so far avoided the example of extravagance set him by his employer, that he had died “warm,” and established Nibson, jun., as confidential agent, etc., in his room, with the additional advantage of a legal education, and a brass plate on his door, legibly inscribed attorney-at-law. Several excellent farms in the neighbourhood, formerly belonging to Trevenny Park, had been sold, it was said; the purchasers’ persons were never known—but what matter?—Nibson, jun., *received* the rents and profits for them, and, doubtless, gave a receipt in full.

Inkspot, as I learnt from the same source, the landlord of the Rentborough Arms, was a *lusus naturæ*, he had no earthly father! The entry in the parish register described him as illegitimate—his mother being Mary, the dairymaid at Trevenny Park. He was educated, first at Christ’s Hospital, and afterwards at the free school at Trevenny, where he always had plenty of pocket-money and eatables, particularly custards and syllabubs; a pony to ride out with the hounds, and, at a suitable age, was *notched*, as he called it, alluding to his *indentures*, to Nibson, with one-third of the business in prospect. No one *knew* whose son he was, but old Nibson paid his bills, and the Viscount *tipp’d* him, whenever he met him; but I shall introduce him presently. After Nibson had bobbed twenty times consecutively, as nearly as I could calculate, he pointed to a chair, and, with difficulty placing himself on another, so as to make one foot rest on the ground, he applied his mouchoir (a very handsome green silk, with geranium-flowered border) to his eyes, or rather his cheeks, for they acted as two bastions to protect his optics, and pointing with his thumb “over the left,” at the snug little parsonage I had before observed, uttered a deep sigh.

“Really, Mr. Nibson,” said I, after due consideration, “I cannot *quite* understand your opening of the case.”

“*He* lived *there*,” sighed Nibson, “pectore ab imo,” and that was from no great distance.

“*He!* who?—what, my old friend, Sam Smyth?”

“Yes, sir; the Reverend Samuel Smyth, our never-to-be-enough-regretted curate. The parties of whose death we instructed you; buried yesterday—would n’t keep—weather hot—blow-flies un-keep-off-able.”

“Really,” said I, “Mr. Nibson, your concise summons to Trevenny rather surprised me, as I have not seen my old college chum for many years; but, being an idle man just now, and, having a remembrance of our former intimacy at Alma Mater, I

am here to do what little good I can for his wife and family—if he has left any such incumbrances.”

“Sir,” said Nibson, “he was not married, luckily.”—(Nibson was—“*Equam servare memento*,” he construed, “mind and be a slave to your wife.”) “And I fear that the duties of the executorship will be hardly compensated by the profits of the residuary legateeship!”

“He was poor, then?”

“Very; though the curacy is a good one as times go—lots of applicants for it. We’re the rector—give a title—snug house—45*l* per annum—surplice fees—now and then two guineas for a new vault—dinner at the park, Sundays, when the family’s at home. Living dirt cheap, if a man’s fond of fish—population small—soles abundant—capital fried!”

“Did my poor friend manage to keep himself, his horse, his yacht, the Merry-go-round, and James Jobs, on 45*l* per annum?”

“Oh, no!—lucky man! got 20*l* additional for one duty a Sunday at Pendean—only four miles off—nice walk over the cliffs, particularly in windy weather—besides, he was capital shot—gun kept him in flesh and fowl—splendid fisherman—Merry-go-round and Jem Jobs profitable concerns. My partner, Isaac Inkspot, nice young man—rather too tall for a lawyer—obliged to stoop to his work, instead of looking up in his profession—hah!—oh! hum!—he!—lodged with him—took half the house off his hands, and lent him his housekeeper when he did n’t want her himself—liberal man—very!”

“Then I think,” said I, “the better plan will be to go at once to the parsonage, and search his division of the house for the will, and examine the property.”

“Certainly,” said Nibson—“anticipatory proposal! But first allow me to introduce my excellent partner—Mr. Inkspot—Reverend the Bursar, gent. from Oxford; executor and residuary legatee of our poor parson; put in his appearance at once.”

Mr. Inkspot had evidently been out “on *very particular* business in the country,” if one might judge by his appearance. He was, in person, the exact antithesis of Nibson, stood six-feet-two or three, very scraggy, and very loose; his dress was buckskins and tops, with broad Brummagem persuaders annexed—a green coat of the species formerly called duckhunters, but modernized into cutaways; buff waistcoat, large shawl neckerchief, an Osbakdeston tile, as he called his hat—with a glass fixed to the brim, for he professed shortsightedness: under his arms he carried the *handle* of a hunting-whip, the lash having been removed to indicate that “the season” was over.

“Ah, Nibby!—do?” in the tone familiar. “Reverend sir, most obedient!” to me—in tone vulgar and half deferential—Nibson

eyeing me all the time closely, to observe the impression which his partner's superior appearance, as he thought, could not fail to make upon me. I could scarcely refrain from bursting into a loud laugh, as this two yards and a nail of legal puppyism rolled himself into a chair, and, coolly laying his whip over Nibby's shoulders, asked : —

“What's up? eh, Nibby?”

“Just going over to inspect premises — take inventory — read will, and give up possession — after payment of all demands,” (*sotto voce*).

“Mr. Inkspot,” said I, “excuse me; but do the Cornwall hounds hunt at this season of the year?”

“Hunt? oh, no! can't conceive! don't take! ain't awake! obtuse — very!”

“I imagined from your dress,” I observed, “it was possible you had been out to kill a late fox.”

“Dress? oh, no! always dress so — my horse likes it — the people approve, and don't know when I am up to a spree out of the common. Rentborough — good fellow — very! leaves all to me — just been seeing the kennel properly cleaned out, and drafting the puppies — *very particular* in those matters, ain't we, Nibby? — very!”

“And I trust you have been equally *particular* in the arrangement of my poor deceased friend's affairs,” said I.

“Who, me! know nothing of them — leave all that sort of thing to Nibby! do n't I, Nibby? (whip again) — hate the law, and all that.”

I saw that Nibson observed my astonishment, which I fondly imagined was only *inward*, and he endeavoured to prolong his leg to tread on his partner's toes; but Inkspot either did not witness the attempt, or, which is quite as likely, despised it, for he coolly went on : —

“I'm not a sleeping partner, though, am I, Nibby? No! I warrant the horses certify the breed of the draft hounds — advertise the meets — publish the runs, and make myself generally useful — eh, Nibby? — very! Do n't buy the nags now — got bit once or twice — deep — very! leave that to Jem and Bill — suspect they bite now and then.”

“Assure you,” said Nibson, looking apologetic, “partner, invaluable to our valued friend and client, Viscount Rentborough! — seem to be mutually made for each other; must keep up the hounds, or lose influence in the county — borough safe enough — dare n't wag an inch without us. Yet we're liberal at elections, ain't we, Mr. Isaac? — very! Our member, Hon. Mr. Stumpup, gives two pounds for tea for the ladies, and puts a boy in the Bluecoat-school once in seven years — good thing for the borough — (*I was lucky enough to get in — very!*) — *We* give a free and easy at 'the

Arms,' at two shillings a head—pleasant party—very ! beer excellent——."

I here ventured to suggest proceeding to business, as I was anxious to return to Oxford.

Nibson and Mr. Isaac rose accordingly, the latter continuing to rise—rise—rise—like a scarlet-runner in a damp summer's evening—till, I thought, like the Lyric poet, he would strike the stars with his lofty head. We crossed the road, Mr. Isaac leading, and opening the gate (after "Nibby" had in vain essayed, by tiptoeing, to reach the latch,) ushered me into a very neat little room.

"Parson's parlour—pretty look out—church one side—sea the other—yacht in sight—bay to the left—capital place for snipes and wild-ducks—river to the right—trout and salmon—fly-fishing unequalled—parson, regular dab at whipping—spun a minnow magnificently !"

On surveying the room, I saw that Inkspot's remarks on my friend's proficiencies were partially confirmed by its contents : in one corner stood a double gun, both barrels loaded, and caps ready on—an old rusty jacket, a quondam black velveteen, hanging on a nail above it, with a dog-whip and shot-belt peering out of the pocket ; over the fireplace was a huge single for wild-fowl, and a canister for powder padlocked, and inscribed "patent safety ;" in another corner was a creel, three or four fishing-rods, a large bag of feathers, hare's ears, hog's down, water-rat skins, and other essentials for fly-making ; a lump of cobbler's wax in an old glove, a landing-net, minnow-can, casting-net, and half a hundred other requisites for Waltonizing ; over the window was a trout and eel-spear reaching the whole length of the room, and opposite the fire was a bit of furniture, evidently formed on college reminiscences—the lower part being a cupboard for miscellanies, and the upper a bookcase conveniently covered in, so as to suit many other purposes, besides the one its deceitful name imported.

In the lower regions of this useful piece of furniture, I found his old college writing-desk and tea-caddy. I could swear to both ; the same dinginess of exterior intimated the identity of the contents ; by them stood a few bottles, pickle-jars, glasses, cruets, and other table-ware ; in short, it was a poor bachelor's butler's-pantry. The upper division, or bookcase, contained his college classics on its lower shelf ; a moderate collection of MS. sermons, with some chiefly compiled and ticketed for certain Sundays and Holy-days, were arranged on the second ; the upper shelf was devoted to the stowage of sundries in the sporting line, the value of which none but an adept could appreciate.

As his executor, I, of course, opened the desk, for it was unlocked ; indeed, I recollected that he had lost the key years before, *while bathing with me in Medley Lock*. As he did not imagine that

any one could be curious enough to investigate the contents of a writing-desk, he merely forced the lock with his bread-and-cheese knife when he got back to college, and fancied himself and the desk quite secure.

"Not very business-like; sorry to leave our papers so—eh? Mr. Isaac!" said Nibson, with a wink peculiarly waggish, as I opened the unresisting depository of my friend's secrets.

"Why, yes—Nibby," replied Inkspot, "it might not be quite so well for some people," putting his arms and head in a position which clearly showed he had seen *one* execution at least; "no danger there, however—know every paper by heart—chiefly recipes—a few choice songs—list of the sick in the parish—a diary of killed and wounded—(that is pratriddles, etc., not parishioners)—pedigrees of puppies, and a few documents, dedicated without permission, from his tailor, grocer, and butcher—careless fellow? very!—I see the receipts are unattached to most of the bills."

I found that Isaac was not falsely boasting of his intimacy with the contents of the desk; and being anxious to search further for any papers that might be of importance, and knowing Sam's habits, I next scrutinized the tea-caddy. Upon lifting up the central ornament—an old cracked decanter filed down for a sugar-basin and the two "wings" for black and green which flanked the centre—I found, as I expected, several pieces of paper curiously folded and almost triturated to tinder. I opened one very gingerly, and with difficulty deciphered with the help of the partners, Nibson and Inkspot, who both seemed "eager for the fray," the following important document:

"A KEWER FOR FUTSORE.

"Tak the liker in which sum salt bif ave bin bild as ot as u can abear it, and sit with yer fit in it for an our or too wile u smokes yur pipe—dont wipe um, but dry um afore the fier—the necs momin u wil find um stif, and smart no-ow-like—but after u ave bin in the wet sweads or the peat-pits, they will be as lissum as ever.

DAN. STUART.

"Sir,—I allays as aff a crown for this un, cos its a warranted un."

The next was nearly as useful, and no doubt as well worth half-a-crown to poor Sam.

"HOW TO KITSH FISH WHEN NO ONE ELSE CAN'T.

"Take an art of oke boks, and rub him all over inside with grundivey and asafetimus—Take some ile of the same, and put it into sum moss fresh of the grund, the grimest is best, and drop it in *rayther thik*—then get sum Taners wurms as ant got no nols in

their tails, and after kippin um for some days in clene moss, put um into the boks of art of oke, and in 2 dais they are fit for use. N.B.—never lend non of um to nobody.

“ W. STUART, his†mark.”

The contents of the caddy were all much of the same nature, and I proposed to visit the dormitory to prosecute my search. Mr. Isaac accordingly led the way into a room, the fac-simile of poor Sam’s bedroom at Oxford, with this difference only — it was not so *dirty*, and the adjoining room, which in college would have been a scout’s room, was a sleeping-place for James Jobs — whom, to my great surprise, we found curled up in one corner, fast asleep.

While Nibson aroused James Jobs to assist us in our search for the will, I just threw my eyes round the sleeping-room. In one corner was a stump-bedstead, with a kind of dimity canopy, to make it look like a French bed—a regular forgery, as Isaac called it; a triangular washing apparatus in another corner; a chest of drawers under the window, with a towel on the top as a toilet-cloth, on which were laid out, as neatly as possible, a primitive array of decapillatory conveniences, or rather necessities; but the most striking object was the long array of shoes and boots of all lengths, breadths, and thicknesses; high-lows, low-highs, lace-ups, mud-boots, waders, and snow-boots. If they were not waterproof, as they professed to be, the only question was, as it appeared to me, how they ever got dry and lissome again, when they were once wet. Across the room was fixed a stout ash pole, which would have puzzled most people, and given them an idea of a patent pre-meditated-suicidal-apparatus, or a drying-line of unnecessary stability; but it was merely intended for gymnastics, *i. e.*, for twisting and twirling round until you had bruised your shins and dislocated almost every limb of your body—a medicine, certainly not an anodyne, to be taken every night and morning, as recommended by Mr. Surgeon Tugtail. On the wall (suspended by a few wafers) were some unframed prints, extracted from “Daniel’s Rural Sports,” “The Shooter’s Vade-Mecum,” and “Walton’s Angler;” and in a corner behind the door, a collection of weather clothing, contemporary with, and equally as efficacious, as the eucnemidals before alluded to.

“Umph!—ha!—odd!—curious!—funny!—very!” said Nibson.

“Comfortable!—convenient—very!” said Mr. Isaac.

“Very, indeed,” said James Jobs, who entered with Mr. Nibson, and advancing quietly before the partners, made a low and respectful bow, and hoped my honour was quite well.

I returned the salutation of “the boy,” as James was still called,

though evidently sixty at least, but in such a way as not to indicate any recognition of a former acquaintance.

"You do not remember me, Mr. Bursar, I see," said James Jobs.

"I cannot," I replied, "recollect ever having seen you before; but now that I observe that scar upon your forehead—surely you cannot be the poor soldier whom Sam and I took as valet from breaking stones on the road at fourpence a day, with the thermometer at zero, and whom we christened Friday?"

"The same, sir; and had it not been for your kindness, I must have perished from cold and want."

The fact was, James Jobs, or Man Friday, as we called him at college, was of a respectable tradesman's family near Oxford; but, being of a "roving disposition," had, early in life, enlisted into a horse regiment, and served in the American war, where, in consequence of a severe sabre cut over the eyes, which had very nearly proved fatal, he got his discharge, and returned to England to find his family extinct, with the exception of one cousin, who was so much elevated in life as to disown poor James; the result was, that he got a deal of pity, but no money; and when the few friends who remembered him after twenty years' absence were tired of feeding him and listening to his tales of the wars, he was forced to apply to his parish; the overseers of which, in kind consideration of the severity of the cold, set him to break stones on the road, at so much per bushel, by which he got warmth, and two shillings per week, paid at twice; so that, after paying for a bundle of straw, and leave to sleep in a loft, he had not much for meat and drink; a red herring and two potatoes served him for two days, and his drink did not intoxicate him much, being chiefly Pindar's much-lauded *ariston*.

We saw the poor fellow at work as we were trying to warm our limbs up Headington Hill, and finding that he had served as an officer's servant in a cavalry regiment, and could look after a horse well, we engaged him at a trifle a week, and let him have the run of rack and manger. The day of his relief from starving and stone-breaking being Friday—and Robinson Crusoe's valet running in our heads—we termed James Jobs "Friday," and by that name he went, as long as Sam remained at college. It appeared that he had lived with my friend Sam, off and on, as he said, ever since, and had hoped not to outlive a master who, whether rich or poor, had always proved to him a kind friend.

When James had recovered himself, and could command his feelings sufficiently to address me again—"Sir," said he, "I am glad you are come down—I always told master you would stand his friend, and the assurance seemed to comfort him. I have here, sir, in this drawer, a letter and a packet which I was to give into your hands; the packet is bulky, and it took master many years



to write it—but it amused him in the long evenings, when his health would not allow him to enjoy his friends' fireside. Master, sir, was an old man, and may be, the new-light people might think him a bad one, because he loved sporting. But what I look at, sir, is this, never was a man more beloved in the parish—his church was full of a Sunday, and he preached what we could all understand. If he offended any one, it would have been, these gentlemen here," bowing to Nibson and Inkspot, "for he was a regular lawyer-starver, and settled all disputes quicker and cheaper than a chief-justice."

"Perfectly correct," said Nibson.

"True—very!" said his partner.

"And here," continued James Jobs, "is what master called his last testament, poor fellow—he had not much to will away, for he gave away, all he could spare while he lived—and he lived the happier for it. He had but one fault that ever I found out, sir, and that was what lost him his life at last—*he wanted ballast*—and as Mr. Heavysides, the coroner, justly observed, that was what lost the Merry-go-round—*she wanted ballast*."

I cast my eye over the will and found that he had left every thing to me, including James Jobs—begging that I would merely distribute such of his property as I did not want in the following way:—to Nibson, his books, for his eldest boy's use—to Inkspot, his writing-desk, regretting that the key was lost—his guns, to the keepers at the park—his fishing-tackle, to James, who was as great a "killer" as his master—and his boots, shoes, and clothes, to the poorest of his parishioners, whose wants no one knew better than himself.

I gave orders to Nibson and Inkspot to dispose of the furniture, and distribute the proceeds of it among the poor of the parish generally, and took James Jobs and the parcel to the Rentborough Arms, where the worthy solicitors received a check from me to cover all their demands. Whether it was doubly gratifying on account of its being unexpected, or not, I don't know, but they became doubly civil, and even invited me to dinner. This I begged to decline, and bowed them out; and, ordering James to book two outsides, I started by the first coach, and after being regularly soaked here I am.

"And where," said our senior tutor, "is James Jobs?"

"Sound asleep in his old quarters by this time: I ordered him a commons, and a pint of the dean's particular, as I came in, and rely on it he has since been to the stables and rubbed my horse down, and laid himself up in clover in the *tallet*, as usual."

"And what," said the vice-principal, "did the parcel and letter contain?"

"That," said the Bursar, "is at present a mystery. Peter!"

"Sir!"

"Send Mrs. Peter to warm my bed, and bring me *one* tumbler of brandy-and-water, hot and strong."

"Not a bad move," said the chaplain—*et sic omnes*.

## CHAPTER II.

WHEN the 1st of May, 1839, had arrived, and with it the new number of the *New Monthly*, I, Peter Priggins, went to the nearest bookseller's and bought it, saying it was for one of the undergraduates of St. Peter's—though my paying ready money for it was quite sufficient to convict me of obtaining it under false pretences—it was not acting in character.

I confess I felt more nervous on this occasion than I had supposed possible, and hid the volume in my pocket as quickly and carefully as a young poacher would his first wired hair, or a charity-schoolboy the first fruits of his nocturnal visit to a neighbouring orchard. "If," said I, "I should actually be in print!!" The very vertebræ of my back, which are usually bent slightly forward, from approaching old age, were immediately straightened, or rather curved in a *vice versa* direction at the thought, and I hurried home to examine the bane or antidote of my anxiety—as the first peep might prove it to be—in private.

In vain I endeavoured to find the means of doing so at home. My old woman, by which familiar, though fond title Mrs. P. is generally known in college, except by undergraduates, who call her "Old Mother Priggins," followed me from room to room with the same peculiarly suspicious or sagacious look with which she used to regard me in our younger days, when she imagined I was going to devour the contents of a smuggled bottle of port "to my own cheek," that is, without allowing her an opportunity of proving herself my "better half." As her suspicions were roused, I felt convinced that, if she should leave the room, it would only be to listen at the door, and that the rustle of the uncut leaves of the *New Monthly* would be construed, by her overcharged imagination, into the *bobbling-wobbling* noise caused by me in *guggling* the wine from the neck of the bottle. I, therefore, like a skilful general, secured my success by a well-timed retreat.

It occurred to me that, as the college groves had been laid out at an enormous expense, for the express purposes of meditation in sweet solitude, and studious retirement, I should be sure to find them deserted. I accordingly sneaked in the back way, and found my expectations realized. I was alone! and hastily opening my newly-purchased treasure turned to the awful words,

“TO CORRESPONDENTS, etc.,”

where I fully expected to see “Peter Priggins is an old fool! The editor’s cook-maid, however, is grateful to him for a timely supply of curl-papers, so he may think himself lucky that his article has not proved altogether unserviceable;” or, “*solve senescentem equum*, you, Peter P. are the *old ass* alluded to;” or some kind hint of the sort—but no! I was “accepted,” as the Freemasons say, so I got out my bread-and-cheese knife, and as rapidly as my trembling hands would allow me, “cut my way bravely through,” to the spot on which all my hopes of fame rested—and there, sure enough, I found *my article in printed characters!!!* I tried to read it—but in vain—I can’t describe my feelings, or why I could not read in legible print what I had mumbled over and over again in illegible MS.; nor can I say what I *did*, but I’ve a faint recollection of having made an excessive fool of myself in a private way. I do recollect rushing to the buttery, and asking for a pint of the dean’s particular, which, I fancied, tasted more delicious than usual, and smacked my lips at the aroma that rested upon them.

“I consider,” said Spigot the butler, evidently pleased at my appreciating his manufacture, “that that’s the best beer in—”

“The *New Monthly Magazine*,” said I.

“Oxford,” continued Spigot. “Better was never brewed by—”

“The editor,” said I, again lowering my jug.

“Messrs. Squashy and Washy, the great—”

“Publisher in Great Marlborough Street,” said I.

“Brewers,” ended Spigot, who bore my interruptions with more philosophy than I should have given him credit for; but that I am aware he is usually as full of beer of his own brewing as I was then of the article of my own writing; *id est*, “full to the bung.” In saying that I was *composed* by my libation, I mean not to insinuate that Spigot used narcotics in his malt—he was too wide awake at all hours, though he kindly condescended to drink several quarts of his best, in the course of the day, *for* those gentlemen who forgot to drink it for themselves. *Great* is the enmity between him and a water-drinker! *laudes redde domino!* But to return to me and my article. I did not say one word about it, even to my wife, that night; but the next morning I stepped down to College, called on one of my old masters, and told him of my success. He ordered me to leave the book with him, and call again. I did so.

“Peter,” said he, smiling, “you are an independent member of society! take a bottle of the oldest port from the furthest bin, and drink success to your bantling. But,” as he returned the book, “*draw it mild.*” I did as I was desired then, and mean to do so always.

As I found I had not offended my superiors by "my life and times," I wished to ascertain what my compeers would say about it; and though I fully expected to meet with a share of that envy which invariably attends on superiority, I confess I did not expect precisely the reception I met with, on entering the parlour of the Shirt and Shothag—a respectable public, where college-servants and little (*non quoad corpora*) tradesmen meet, to their mutual enlightenment on subjects private and public—*generally* in a peaceable and quiet way; but on this occasion "opinion," as Euripides says, "went divided through the warlike army of the scouts;—to some, it seeming good, to others, not," that I should venture to risk the reputation of the fraternity, by becoming an author, and publishing to the world things "that ought to be hidden under many a leaf," as Flaccus has it.

To the elder brethren of the pail and pumphandle, my explanations were quite satisfactory; but the younger branches of the profession who were present, being enrolled as members of the new "institution for promoting the quicker march of mechanism and morality," were, of course, too conceited to listen to any one but themselves, and I was fearful of being obliged to resort to more powerful arguments than words, when the *ringing* of twenty or thirty bells saved me the trouble of performing that operation on their juvenile noses. College dinners were waiting for them—to wait on their masters—so they could not wait at the Shirt and Shothag to annoy us any longer.

I found myself left in the company of my friends Broome, of Ch. Ch. College and Dusterly, of St. Mark's, like myself, retired bedmakers—men who had wisely adopted Horace's motto, "*pone moras et studium lucri*," by giving up their lazy habits and hopes of extra fees, for the more rational, though no less professional delights of beer and *baccur*, as they invariably pronounce it at the "society of science and sociability," lately founded by Squashy and Washy, the great brewers before alluded to, in opposition to "The Society of Aquarians," who wish to substitute scalded succory for swipes, and the liquor of bad burnt beans for beer.

"Priggins," said Broome, after taking kindly the head off the pint I had just ordered in, which he had a right to do, having the advantage of me by three inches in height, twelve in girth, and five years' seniority in college; "Priggins, I feel grateful to you for your services to college-servants, a race of men who have hitherto been expected to see all and say nothing. It becomes you, as a retired man, to be constantly before the public; and since the publication of Drunken Barnaby's journal, and the somniferous recipes of Cicero Kewkes, the public have been deprived of all opportunity of seeing into the nature of life in Oxford, the works which now and then emanate from the university press being too light

for general reading, and but little known elsewhere. I trust, therefore, you will persevere; and any little help I can give you, command it; for, though not a dab at a dictionary, I'm down to all their doings, from fifty to five hundred a year."

"And I," said Dusterly, quietly absorbing the corpus of my pint, of which Broome had taken off the caput (*jam mortuum et sepultum*), leaving me no residuum; "I willingly pledge myself (I wished he had done it in his own beer) to haid so huseful a hobject."

I politely remarked that it was not necessary for him to lay so much stress on his words to convince me of his sincerity, and thought the most acceptable mode of proving my gratitude for their kind offers was to order another pint, and drink their healths, and many thanks to them, for their obliging intentions, which I did in a bumper, and no heel-laps.

"I am particularly delighted," continued Broome, "with your remarks on the great ignorance one meets with *out of* Oxford; but knowing that fact, as you did and do, you ought to be more compassionate, and explain as you go along."

"Yes," chimed in Dusterly; "ow can you himagine has hany of them hignoramuses knows hany thing about a common-room or a bursar? I pledge myself (which he would have done in my jug again, if it had not been empty) to prove that they faucy a common-room is a coffee-room at a hinn; and a bursar a bagman, from your description of his coming hin hoff a journey, and drinking his bottoms of brandy."

"And I wonder," resumed Broome, "what they take a scout and bedmaker to be?"

"I'll bet pints round," said Dusterly, chuckling at his notion, "they fancy him a hamphibious hanimal,—a cross between a harrand-boy and a chambermaid."

"Well, gentlemen," said I, "I'm obliged by the hints you have given me; but I feel easy on that subject, as some of our old masters, who are scattered every where over the face of the globe, will readily explain these difficulties if referred to. So, as you, Mr. Dusterly, seem to have got your steam up, perhaps you would favour me with a few more valuable hints?"

"No," said Dusterly; "I never like to happear *too* knowing:—it gets a man into a scrape sometimes."

"True," remarked Broome; "I know a case in point, which occurred to an old Westminster—I heard him tell it at a wine-party, up one of my staircases, No. 4, Tom Quad, three pair to the left. The conversation was running high, about racing, and hunting, and so on—and a little freshman was going no-end-of pace about what he had done and could do, and so on,—as freshmen are wont to do,—when the old Westminster pulled him up all of a heap with a double chifney, and gave him a broad hint

how to behave himself, which I will tell you in his own words, as nigh as I can remember them. It was when Sir Thomas Mostyn was alive ; so I call it

#### A DAY WITH SIR THOMAS.

“ When I came up to reside,” he began, “ I confess I knew little of riding, much less of hunting ; and the little knowledge I had of riding was more theoretical than practical ; my performances having been limited to the donkey which we bullied on the common at home in the holidays, and the old pony that had carried the whole family for twelve years at least ; whose hide was stick-proof, and whose paces were reduced to two—one, slow, lingering and unwilling *from* the stable ; another, quicker, livelier, and sometimes attended with indecent capers *to* his rack and manger. Still, while at Westminster, whenever hunting foxes or hares was talked of, or coursing or racing (steeple-chasing was not invented then, the country not being too thickly populated), I felt unwilling to acknowledge that my father was either too poor, too stingy, or too timid, to allow me to join in these manly amusements ; and by picking up a few slang phrases from others, sneaking about the livery-stables in Westminster, chaffing with the grooms and coachmen, while waiting for their masters, about ‘ the houses,’ I began to talk loudly of bulfinches and raspers, the long tails and the slips ; and offered and took the odds on the favourite for the Derby or the Leger ; and by my skill in hedging and making up a book, not only astonished my friends, but myself. In short, I told more lies about the matter in one day then, than I could now invent in a week.

“ My great misfortune was, as you will see by and by, that I could lie in safety, as our racing at school was confined to boat-racing, and our hunting to running after one another, sometimes with a strongish scent in the air, too, in Tothill Fields, and I talked so *well* and so *offhandedly*, that no one dreamed I was coming Munchausen over him.

“ I was once very nearly caught out at it ; *unfortunately* I was not. According to my account, my father, though he did not actually keep the hounds of the Northamptonshire hunt, was by far the largest subscriber to them, had the management of the kennel, and kept six hunters for his own use ; having always two out in the field, and hunting three times a week, besides cover-hacks, buggy-horses, and ponies for us boys.

“ I had told this story so often, that I not only imposed upon others, but began to entertain some doubts myself whether the stud was merely an imaginary one ; when, one day, as I was standing, talking *sporting*, and making a lash of twisted string to lie on to a hooked stick, as a feeble imitation of a hunting-whip, a new boy was brought

in, and of course subjected to the usual pertinent, if not *impertinent* questions, 'What's your name—eh spoony?' with a cut on the face.

" 'Stig—Stig—Stig—Stiggins,' replied the novelty, blubbering at the unexpected warmth of his welcome.

" 'Come, none o' that, you little beggar,' said another boy, who, settling matters even, by an application to his head's antipodes, asked him, 'What's your governor?'

" 'A p—p—pars—parson.'

" 'What! do you mean a methodist parson?' and to try his Christian humility he was smitten on the other cheek likewise.

" 'No; he's rec—rec—rector of Clodpolecum-Bumpkin in Northamptonshire.'

" 'All right! how much money have you got—eh? did your governor stump up like a brick—eh? What's your tip?'

" 'A suf—sufferin, and if I want any more, I'm to ask a boy named John Hallum for some—he's our squire's son.'

" 'Hullo! Jack Hallum! here! you 're wanted,' cried twenty voices to me at once, as I was sneaking off the moment I heard the brat's name and address. 'Here's a little kivey from your part of the world, who says you 're to be his banker, for he knows you at home; and I dare say his mother expects you to wash his feet and comb his hair. Have you got a small-tooth and scrubbing-brush, you little varmint?'

" Poor Stiggins, to whom this was addressed, stared in amazement at a question he could not understand; but, before it could be repeated, one of the big boys, who had, perhaps, doubted the genuineness and authenticity of some of my *strainers*, or was vexed at his own being eclipsed by them, came up and, in a kinder tone than little Stiggins had yet heard in college, inquired how far he lived from me.

" 'Only just outside the park,' was the answer.

" 'And how many horses does old Hallum keep, my little man?'

" 'Two, now, a four-wheeler, and the postman's pony—that un as you broke his knees, Master John,' meaning me.

" I saw a knowing wink and a meaning smile pass round the circle of my old admirers, and I knew how thoroughly I was *done*, if once found out, so giving Stiggins a flick on his haunches with the whip, catching him by the scruff of his neck, 'Come here, you little lying son of a tithe-pig,' said I, 'come with me, and I'll oblige your governor and governess by taking care of you as you deserve.'

" I lugged him off to my room as quickly as I could, and there told him, that as I chose my father to have six hunters, and no end of hacks and brood mares, he must back my assertions, and I'd say his father kept his carriage, and his sisters had a grand-piano; but, if he dared to split on me, I'd not only swear his father was cut by

all the country for going drunk to a funeral, but that his eldest sister had had a child by the gardener.

"This, and the sight of the whip I was just finishing off, had the desired effect, and I told more lies, of a much superior description, than I did before his arrival, appealing to him for confirmation of them—with, 'Did n't I, Stiggins?'—'Of course—to be sure—I remember it well.' It was not likely that he had *forgotten* what he had never heard of before.

"When I went down to Oxford to enter, I got up enough information in my old way, to return and give the most splendid description of a run I had had with the Craven, that beat Tom Smith's out and out; so that when I came into residence, I was expected to be a very fast man, and had to tell more lies than ever, to explain how the governor was selfish enough to keep all his horses at home, and to threaten me with stopping the supplies, if I ever hunted or rode up at Oxford.

"But '*culpam pœna premit comes*,' as Horace very justly observes. That same big boy, now a little man, Tom Sharpe by name, who had always suspected me at school, was doubtless confirmed in his views of my character, and laid a trap for me. He invited me to a wine-party at his rooms, and as the champagne circulated, and the claret flowed, my ideas enlarged, and I certainly succeeded in astonishing every man there, even an A. B., of master's standing.

"Tom Sharpe, who saw the time was come, rose and proposed my father's health, as a man to whom the county of Northampton was deeply indebted for his zeal and liberality, in promoting the noble sport of fox-hunting.

"Hallum and the hounds! Hip—hip—hip—hurrah! Nine times nine! One cheer more! Yoicks!—tally ho!—hark forward!—go it, ye cripples!—jingle, jingle, jingle—crash, smash, rattle—rap, rap, rap—who-hoop!' and down sat the company, exhausted with their efforts to do honour to me and the toast.

"I replied modestly and appropriately, which elicited a fainter repetition of the former cheers. When they had subsided:—

"'I say, old fellow!' said Tom Sharpe, 'we've heard you talk a good deal about your leaps and all that, and devilish well you *do* talk, but we've never seen you *do* it. Now, I'll give you a mount-to-morrow. You shall ride my Randy-rasper—we have an excellent meet, and shall have capital sport—sure to find, and in a country that will just suit you, who prefer brooks to stone walls.'

"'Hurrah!' cried the rest, 'you're a capital fellow, Tom—wish you 'd mount us all. You can't refuse, Hallum—eh?'

"In vain I hinted at my vow to the governor—my being obliged to go to three lectures, and my private coach on the morrow; and, as a last resource, to the fact of my boots and breeches—white cords



were all the go then—being left in the country, and my pink being quite too small for me. I was promised every thing for a complete set-out, and went to bed nearly dead drunk, with the pleasing conviction on what little of my mind I had left, that I should be quite *dead* next night, without the satisfaction of being *drunk* too.

“If going to sleep was bad enough under this impression, what were my feelings on awakening in the morning? I sat up in bed—my head aching ready to split—my tongue feeling like a bit of stale hung-beef in my parched mouth. My stomach!—oh! dear!—and my nervous system not shaken, but completely shattered. At last I consoled myself with the thought that my crippled state was just the lucky thing to release me from my unlucky engagement, and I was trying to write a note to Tom Sharpe, containing, in a shaky scrawl, a piteous statement of my case, and begging to be excused, when his servant entered my room, with a pair of *tops* in one hand, and the rest of the dress for the ‘character’ I fancied I should play for that ‘one day only’ in the other; and, touching his hair with one finger, said:—

“‘Master’s compliments, sir, the grub’s on the table, and the trap ordered at hart-arter nine, and he hopes as ow you’ll clean yourself as quick as bricks.’

“‘But, James,’ said I, ‘I really feel very ill; I was just going to send a note to your master, to say I could not join him to-day.’

“‘Master von’t take no excuse,’ replied James, looking determined, *propositi tenax*, ‘for he knows you was bosky last night, and in course, qualmy this morning; and the physic’s ready what’ll set you all right in *no time*.’

“‘Physic?’

“‘Yes, a hot mash, as you’ll lap up in *no time*, and feel yourself as full of beans as a grocer’s coffee-mill; but I must cut my lucky, sir, as master’s a waiting to be rubbed down ready for starting.’

“As James or Jim, as his familiars called him, would not await any further expostulation, I began to dress. Imitating as closely as I could the correct men of that day, I took particular care to slew the buttons at the knees well forward in a slanting-dicular direction, and to push the boots down into the most desirable wrinkles. I put my hat on knowingly, with the ribbon fluttering in sight, which was to be confined to my collar as a *beaver-catcher* during the run; and, putting my heavy-handed whip under my left arm, with the lash dangling about, squared my elbows, pulled on my Woodstocks, and started, not a little pleased at my personal appearance, which I took care should not be lost on the college; for I went under one excuse to the buttery, and another to the kitchen; then stood in quad, and called loudly for my scout; and when I thought all had been sufficiently gratified with the sight of the gentleman in pink, I turned out of college, and walked to——Coll. at the same deli-

berate pace, and with the same gracious intentions to the public in general, as I had just evinced to my own college in particular, which induced a little dirty-nosed snob to cry out to one of his friends :—

“ ‘ I say, Bill, twig that ere *scarlet-runner* ;—an’t he vun to go the pace ? ’ ”

“ I felt the insult, but did not express my indignation ; and, climbing up to Tom Sharpe’s garret, found him, with two other men, pitching into underdone beefsteaks and kidneys, and washing them down with porter, in a way that surprised and disgusted me not a little, for they were just as drunk as I was over-night.

“ ‘ Hulloh ! old fellow,’ cried Tom, ‘ why you have n’t been fool enough to come out in pink without your great-coat and leggings on ? You ’ll nap it, my boy ! You know your dons won’t stand that. But, come, fall to—time’s short—weather muggy—roads woolly, and whiplcord scarce.’ ”

“ I shuddered at the food, like a Jew at a pork-chop ; which Tom observing, he went on :—

“ ‘ Beg pardon, old fellow—I forgot Jim said you were off your feed, and wanted a drench—here, put your muzzle into this, and mop it up as quick and as hot as you can, and I ’ll bet the long odds you ’ll be all right before we get to Bicester.’ ”

“ He put a neat silver tankard into my *fore foot*, as he called my hand, and the very odour of it was enough to gratify a dowager-duchess—the taste !—ye gods !—but, as I am not selfish, I ’ll tell you the contents—*probatum est*.

“ Boil four glasses of jelly in a pint of the best Madeira, in a *silver* vessel ; and two glasses of Curaçoa, and a little *powdered* cinnamon, cloves, mace, and nutmeg !—a drink for *two* !—the which, if they don’t ‘ drinkee for drunkee,’ they ’ll get ‘ drunkee for drinkee.’ ”

“ After imbibing about half a pint of this ambrosial nectar, and nibbling a hot ginger-nut, I felt much better, and rather saucy. Jim came in to say the buggies were ready ; and the trio lighting their cigars, in which I could not venture to join them, we started for Kickum’s livery-stables.

“ ‘ Now,’ said Tom, ‘ tumble in, old fellow : I’m waggoner—you pay pikes. The *old* flogger, Jim ; the clouds look watery.’ So, taking a shabby, but straight-cropped whip from Jim, and sticking it upright by his side, away we went at a trot about fourteen miles an hour, with our two friends in a hack dennet behind, making up by a gallop now and then.

“ When we got to Deakins’s at Bicester, where we were to leave the buggy and mount our horses, I felt so very queer again, that Tom thought the dose he had administered before starting had failed

for once ; so, ringing the bell, he ordered a bottle of brown stout and some bread and cheese.

“ ‘ *I always,*’ said he, ‘ stick to the *Brunonian* system, and keep up to the mark—you ’ll feed a little now, and be all right soon.’ ”

“ I tried to eat, but my larynx, or fauces, or whatever the pill-grinders call one’s swallow, felt so dry, I could not ; so, pouring down two tumblers of the stout, I proposed to be off. Having made up my mind to be killed, I thought that the sooner the *throw off* took place the better. The *suspense* is the worst part of it, as the man allowed, previously to his being *turned off*.

“ I found Randy-rasper in the yard, and mounted her successfully, and felt as long as we kept the road it would be ‘ all right,’ as Jim said ; but we *met* just out of the town, and in less than five minutes found ourselves among a hundred and fifty men at least.

“ Uninitiated as I then was in the mysteries of Nimrodism, I could twig the difference between the regular-bred old stagers and the young would-be’s, and comforted myself with the conviction that I was not the only fool going to ‘ risk his reputation on a horse’s back ;’ and if Tom had allowed me to sneak about where I liked, I should have done very well ; but neither he nor his mare would allow me to part company, so great was her attachment to her master, or his horse, her fellow-slave.

“ I won’t detain you with an account of the hounds and horses, or the names, weights, and colours of the riders ; suffice it to say, all was done that judgment and skill could suggest, but Pug could not be found ; and after trying five or six covers we found ourselves—at a place called Claydon (upper, middle, or east, I forget which)—obliged, to my secret delight, and Tom Sharpe’s evident disgust, to give it up as a blank day ; at the same time, I of course outwardly d—d my ill-luck, and was congratulating myself on showing off in a quiet canter to Bicester on the turnpike road, and lying like blazes when I got to college again, when a tall, gentlemanly-looking man, on a splendid gray—his scarlet frock and stained tops looking like work—rode up, and addressing Tom, who, I thought at the time, looked wicked, ‘ presumed we were Oxford men, and that our hacks were at Bicester ; and, if we would allow him, would show us across country, and save us two miles at least, especially as our hunters were fresh !’ ”

“ Tom thanked him, and after making a few observations on the day, and the scarcity of foxes, he turned through a gap into a grass ground, and cantered gently ahead—Tom next, and I in the rear. I liked it amazingly at first, and clearing two furrows, at least eighteen inches wide, and a narrow ditch into the next ground, without losing a stirrup, began to fancy I could *do* it as it should be.

“ Our pace gradually quickened, still nothing occurred to frighten me till we came to a gaping ditch, full of water, with what I thought

an awful hedge on the other side. 'You must ram them at it, gentlemen,' said our guide, and he and Tom were over in *no time*, as Jim would have said. 'Forward!' cried both, and away I went, Jupiter only knows how or where; but I stuck on somehow, and found myself going along, at a slapping pace, over a deep fallow—then partly through, and partly over, a stiff thorn fence—then between two ash-trees, so close together as to threaten destruction to both my knees at once. Here my hat being knocked off, and bounding against my back, still holding on by the ribbon, made the sort of rattling noise the dealers make with their hats and sticks, when they are 'showing out a horse.' This put Randy-rasper on her mettle, and my knees beginning to grow weak, and my strength to fail me, I shouted out as loud as I could to 'pull up;' but Tom, purposely and maliciously mistaking my shouts, joined with our leader in 'Yoicks! forward! well done, my boy—go *it*.' I gave myself up as lost—I seemed to fly, or rather hedges, trees, brooks, walls, and houses seemed to fly by me and I to stand stock-still. The last thing I recollect *seeing* was a hah-hah! with an enormous wall and a wire fence on the top of it. I closed my eyes in the last agonies of despair, and opened them again, as I thought, after a minute or even a second, though it appears I was insensible for nearly an hour. I am *now* convinced I was *not sensible* when I started from Oxford.

"When I came to myself I found I was sitting on the ground, with my back against a tree, our leader, Sir Harvey Takemin, and Tom Sharpe, standing over me, and sponging my face with their handkerchiefs, which they had soaked in a neighbouring duck-pond.

"'Well, old fellow,' said Tom, 'worth ten stiff ones yet; but you've spoilt your beauty.'

"'All right now,' said the baronet, 'here we are in Trottington Park; I'll get the mare caught, give you some lunch, and send you on to Bicester in my trap.'

"In trying to thank him I lisped most wofully, and putting my hand to my mouth found I had knocked out four front teeth; and, on further examination, had cut a regular canal out of my forehead, around which Tom had bound my neckerchief. Luckily no bones were broken; the only further damage was the loss of my hat, which I supplied at the park, and one of my spurs, which was afterwards found and dug out of the pummel of my saddle.

"I need not tell you that I could *eat* nothing. I took, by the advice of our kind but mischief-loving entertainer, a large glass of cold without, and got back to college as sore and miserable as any poor devil could be. I sneaked into bed, and would never have got up again, if my tutor had not insisted on seeing me the next morning.

"I rose and went to his rooms, looking like 'a figure in plaster'—only not so classical.

“ ‘Take a *seat*, sir,’ said he. Now this was doubtless well meant—but human nature could not endure it.

“ ‘All the rest is *leather*,’ as Dr. Pangloss says; but if he had been in my place he would not have spoken so contemptuously of *leather*. We never know the value of a thing till we *lose* it—I respectfully begged to receive his remarks standing.

“ ‘Mr. Hallum! hem! you were not at chapel yesterday, sir, either in the morning or evening—*mane noctuve*—you were absent from all your college lectures, losing my entertaining and invaluable annotations on the several topics under discussion—and you did not dine in hall—these are your *negative* crimes. You were *positively* weak enough, to use a mild term for fool and ass enough, to strut about quad in a dress—borrowed too, I’m informed—forbidden by the laws of this college, and the statutes of the university. You will therefore translate all your lectures, confine yourself to hall, chapel, and college; I shall cross your name on the buttery and kitchen books, and—*think yourself* WELL OFF.’

“ Fortunately for me it was discovered that I had been out in a gig, without leave, and my sentence was commuted to rustication for two terms—of course I destroyed the tutor’s letter, which conveyed the tidings of my disgrace to my father, and substituted a doctor’s certificate of ill health, recommending country air, and especially *horse exercise*.

“ Thus the old adage was verified in me—‘*omnibus in malis aliquid boni inest*’—(which some translate, ‘there’s always some *boneing*, i. e. thieving going on in those rascally omnibuses.’) I escaped quizzing and Tom Sharpe; came up again with a sound and firm seat, and not afraid to face any country.

“ So now give me one more cigar, and I’ll toddle off to my perch, ‘to sleep, perhaps to dream, of Trottington Park.’”

“ Broome,” said I, when he had done, “I feel obliged to you for your story, and with your leave will adopt it in my next number.”

“ Why, as to adopt,” replied he; “if you mean by adopt—to call it your own, it’s a lie; but if you choose to treat us to a paper of bird’s eye, and three quarts of the best beer, you may swear it’s a child of your own, for all I care—you’re not the first man by some hundreds who has got credit, and profit too, from *adopting* another man’s notions and ideas! Adopting children is not near so common nor profitable.”

“ Hand has the heditor will be ignorant hof hit, you need not esitate,” called out Dusterly, as he rose and made a hanticipatory happlication to the bell “for orders”—not theatrical orders, for I paid 2s. 4½d. for them, whereas the others are free gratis for nothing.

When I had discussed my share of the beer and bird’s-eye, I parted from my friends with my usual politeness and punctuality

—for I always *tea* at six. As I bent my “homeward way,” as Goldsmith says in “the Curfew,” and conned over Broome’s story in order to recollect it sufficiently to turn it into writing—a very difficult thing, let me tell you, for a young author of nigh seventy—I could not help congratulating the coroner of the university—for we collegians don’t condescend to let county or city body-searchers sit upon us, but keep a private one for our own convenience—I say I could not help congratulating our man on being so seldom called upon to exercise the disagreeable duties of his honourable office. It really is wonderful so few accidents happen, considering the number of boys that come up from school, and fancy themselves men all at once, and though they were never outside a horse in all their previous states of existence, go and give eight shillings to commit suicide on an Oxford hack, when they might effect their object, and have a cold bath too, for nothing, their corpses when “found drowned” being sent home to their anxious mothers without a mark upon them. I can only account for the miracle in one way, which is, that the livery-stable-keepers, hack-men, as we call them, are as clever, almost, as we scouts, and know their men at first sight—keeping horses to suit all sorts, just as they used, in Macheath’s time in the gaols, to keep fetters to fit all sizes of limbs and purses.

As to a scout, if he is possessed of any judgment and discrimination, *i. e. nous*, combined with practice, he can detect a green one the moment he sees him—*how*, I will explain in some future number:—a public schoolboy will sometimes cause a minute or two’s hesitation; but your private pupil at 300*l* per annum, and two glasses of wine after dinner—you can’t mistake *him*!—he invariably looks as if he had been brought up by two maiden aunts, encouraged to keep tame rabbits, eat moist-sugared bread-and-butter, and indulge in such other little enjoyments which “need no foreign aid nor sympathy.” I’m not over fond of them.

### CHAPTER III.

UNTIL I, Peter Priggins, became an author, and gave to the public those thoughts which I had previously been in the habit of keeping to myself, I confess I had not the remotest idea of the pains and penalties attendant on the *digito monstrary*; or of the propensity of my fellow-creatures to appropriate to themselves characters, for which neither nature nor art ever designed them.

I am tempted to make these observations in consequence of several observations that have been made to me—some rather rudely—since the Oxford public “knew I was out.” I shall merely give

one incident to illustrate my point, lest I unwisely expose myself to the rebuke *ne quid nimis*.

One day, as I was proceeding up St. Giles's in order to take my favourite postprandial walk, round the parks and up to where—as they say of Hicks's Hall—the Diamond House “formerly stood,” *per se*, in all the dignity of loneliness—a spot now, as my friend Dusterly remarks, “kivered hover with hornamental abitations :” just before I got to St. John's I heard the steps of some one progressing rather rapidly in my rear, and on turning round to gratify an excusable curiosity and see who my pursuer was, I recognized Dr. Puffs of—Coll., a rubicund reverend of long standing in the University, and a victim to rheumatism—an *alias* for gout, which he perseveringly insits on adopting, notwithstanding all the faculty are against him. As I turned round to pay my respects to him by removing my hat—an article of dress to which the idiosyncrasy of our race forbids us to resort, except in the streets—he dashed his cane to the ground with so loud and sudden a percussio as to cause me to retrograde a yard at least, and articulating as distinctly as the *sublimis anhelitus* caused by his unusual speed in pursuit of me would allow of, said.—

“Priggins, I believe?”

I bowed assent, and there's something peculiarly fascinating and respectful in a scout's bow, implying a sense of humility, but not of the degradation of a domestic menial—a family footman—Teapost we call them.

“Peter Priggins?” resumed he, laying a stress on my præ-nomen.

I bowed again.

“Formerly scout, bedmaker, and common-room-man of St. Peter's?”

“Yes, sir; where I have often had the pleasure of doing the attentive, when you invited yourself to dine with any of our gentlemen.”

“Silence, sirrah! Author, too, of the trash in the *N. M. M.*, which you are pleased to call your ‘Life and Times?’ as if a scout ought ever to call his life his own, or devote his time to any thing but his masters!”

As he uttered this with a volubility and rapidly-increasing redness of the face that positively alarmed me lest he should burst, he continued to advance, repeating the application of his crutch-headed cane upon the pavement so that I was obliged in self-defence to assent and retreat at the same time, until I got the posts of St. John's terrace between us, through which I knew his rotundity could not obtrude without a great deal of time and dexterous manœuvring.

"How dare you, sirrah," he continued, "shew *me* up?"

"*You*, sir," replied I, in amazement; for I'll declare on the honour of a scout I had too great a respect for the University to drag so remarkable an individual before the public as a specimen of one of its members. "*You*, sir?"

"Yes, *me*, sir;" and in giving emphasis to his rejoinder he directed a sturdier blow than usual at the pavement, which unluckily lighted heavily on the newly-convalescent great toe of his suffering foot. Never shall I forget the very odd expression of his otherwise inexpressive features! a sort of mixture—pain and rage, a. a. 3ij, with a sense of self-humiliation, and the certainty of a renewed fit of podagra, q s. The positive inability at getting at the injured member to rub it, owing to his obesity, probably prolonged his passion and the pain—not to mention the grins of sundry *snobiculi*, who were passing to the national schools at the moment. As soon as he had recovered sufficiently to give utterance to his words, he recommenced—(My part of the dialogue being carried on by "nods and becks and wreathed smiles.")

"*Me*, sir? yes, sir! Ain't I a Bursar? Don't I come in off a journey? Don't I eat soup—drink port wine and egg-flip, and top up with brandy-and-water? Don't I know a man named Smith or Smyth? and yet you deny having shewed me up in No. I.!"

From my knowledge of his habits, I could not deny his assertions as to the love of liquids, and felt but little reasonable doubt in my mind that he knew a man named Smith. I, therefore, merely suggested that every college in Oxford had a Bursar, (pursers they call them on board ship) and every Bursar might or might not, as chance or nature dictated, drink port, eat soup, top up with cogniac, and know a man named Smith; but it did not follow that any individual of them had sat for the portrait I drew of *our* Bursar in No. I.

However effective my words and manner might have been with any more reasonable and less irate person, with Dr. Puffs they produced precisely the same results on his temper as a few grains of arsenic do on being added to gunpowder; he went off as quick again as before, and fired away with such increased velocity that I could not distinctly hear his sentences, but had a strong suspicion that his style was bordering on the naughty and uncivil, and am firmly persuaded his last words were, "D—d old twaddle!"

I merely mention this to shew how difficult it is to steer clear of the charge of personality, unless you treat of matters and men indubitably antediluvian.

I really regret to add that Dr. Puffs dined on some delicious apoplectic dishes that day at some other man's expense, and (from the quantity or quality of the viands, and the excitement inimical to digestion which his interview with me, his traducer, as he



wrongly thought me, had unfortunately caused) was obliged to be conveyed home in a fly, serious fears being entertained that he had the gout in his stomach, until the physician had ascertained by inquiry that from the mass of solids and fluids stowed away there, it could not possibly be, because there was not *room* for it.

Dr. Puff's rudeness upset me, and as I knew it was useless to pursue my intended walk with a view of ridding myself of my annoyed feelings, I adopted the advice which all doctors in difficult cases invariably give, and tried change of scene. I slipped quietly across Broad Street, down the Turl, Blue Boar Lane, and by the back of the Peckwater, through Merton Groves, into Christ-church Meadow, where I amused myself by observing the antics of the younger branches of our profession, who, in "the Long" (*subaudi*, vacation) are, like their masters, at leisure, and indisposed for any thing but pleasure as long as their accumulated wages last out.

I must confess that, strong as my prejudices are in favour of Oxford men in any athletic sports, especially rowing, I have seen a crew of College servants go it nearly as well, and look nearly as gentlemanly as their masters, in an eight or four oar—especially as they make it a rule to keep their masters' Jerseys and pea-jackets aired, by giving them due daily exposure to the sun and wind, on their own persons; their powers of imitation, too, might really impose upon any innkeeper, below the town of Abingdon, so far as to induce him to imagine them gentlemen in disguise, if they did not *over* do it, and would but keep their mouths shut, except for the purpose of imbibing their beer and inhaling their tobacco.

In my younger days, things on the water were different to what they are now; Godstow and Medley up-stream were resorted to, and racing was seldom or ever heard of until Medley was done away with as a place of refreshment, and the boats transferred to the river below Oxford: then they began to increase in number, and improve in build. The Etonians and Westminsters stimulated the Davises and Bossoms to emulate the fame and charges of Serle, Rawlinson, and other eminent London manufacturers; and poor Stephen undertook the office of private nautical, or rather fresh-aquatic or cymbatic tutor, much to the undergraduate's advantage and his own. "Going down with Stephen" meant work was intended; and when he was in condition and good wind, his *sprints* were awful and killing to those whose stamina was at all weak.

A good boat-race is certainly a splendid sight, especially when conducted in the fair, manly, and honourable way in which the Oxford matches are; no base thoughts of winning a cup, value fifty guineas, intervening; but all for sheer honour and the pride of

seeing the College colours at the top of the flag-staff of the barge : a pride in which we servants share as fully as our masters, and when victorious we offer our libations to old Father Thames in wholesome ale—at their expense, as freely and as zealously as they do, under the more classic name of Governor Isis, in claret and champagne.

Boating is an amusement, the cheapest and most innocent of any in Oxford; and I hope the time will never come when the tea-and-tractmen get such an ascendancy as to talk even of putting it down. As long as any of us of the old school live, we shall oppose it—I mean our masters, not ourselves; but these are queer times, and much of what was formerly considered morality is now called vicious, and deprecated accordingly. The time may come when the boats will be sold to buy books of science for the natives of Timbuctoo, and other outlandish places, the profits of which will go to those nice men the missionaries, and the oars be converted into staves to arm the men of the new rural police for—*μη γινεϊτο*, says Peter Priggins!

With regard to the Henley regatta, I cannot say I quite like the idea of our young men letting themselves down to the level of the crews of those *monstra natantia*, the guards, Leanders, and others, who row for hire, *i. e.* work to *win*—besides I have a horror of any amusement that opens the way to gaming or betting; and many a man, to make himself appear *fast*, will hazard a wager with one of those knowing individuals above alluded to, the payment of which—for he's sure to lose—may cripple him for two or three terms; and although I like a lark as well as any man, and hate a humbug as I do old Nick, I am a bit of a stickler for college discipline—it keeps us respectable in the eyes of an envious world—who would crush us if they could—but they can't. The idea of our men entering themselves, like race-horses, to run for a cup, for the amusement of all the landlords, louts, and labourers of a little cockneyfied neighbourhood like Henley, and the advantage of the licensed victuallers, is very annoying and degrading—it smells too strong of profit. I always fancy the hotel-keepers doing a sort of rule of three sum to themselves when they think of it; as, “If two Oxford men come here and spend 5*l*, what will four hundred spend?” Not to mention getting rid of the stale beer and flat bottled porter to the cads and coachmen who form their tail. Whenever Cambridge challenges us to row them at Henley, well and good; we will go in and beat them—if we can; and if they like the winners to be entertained with a good supper afterwards, well and good; but no medals—no cups—no purses—say I, for the honour and glory of Oxford.

Such a match as that to which I have just consented took place about nine or ten years since, and I've got a letter all about it,

which I here publish. One of my masters gave it to me ; it was written by a friend of his, who was one of a party at the

HENLEY BOAT-RACE,  
BETWEEN  
OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE.

It is directed to

“ Robert Rural, Esq.  
“ Rustic Grange,  
“ Rutlandshire.

“ Dear Bob,

“ I am very seedy, and rather stiff; nevertheless I cannot resist the inclination to try to relieve the *ennui* under which you must be labouring in the country. The idea of being boxed up with your old governess at the Grange!—doing penance on barley-water and boiled chicken—no beer, no wine, no nothing—in submission to the orders of your medical is rather a nuisance I calculate; but it's all your own fault, you will be so devilish fast there's no stopping you, until you run your head against some wall or other, and get pulled up all of a heap. Just as if you could not have kept quiet for one week, and pulled in our boat, instead of larking off to Witney after Poll Stich, the little ugly milliner's girl, and depriving us of the best No. 7 that ever turned oar in ro'lock, thereby losing your laurel crown, (though one of *parsley* would be more congenial now with your chicken) for, to ease your doubts at once, Oxford won by a hundred yards at least; but I must give you an account of the whole thing, it was *res non parva* I can tell you.

“ We found no little difficulty in getting a man to supply your place, but at last obtained a Jesus man, full of bone and beer; which last substance we succeeded in abstracting by a severe course of sudorifics and salts, under the advice and inspection of Stephen Davis, who got him into wind, by making him pull behind him, in a two-oar, down to Ifley and back, every other hour every day, as soon as he considered him medicinally *safe* for a start; giving him two sour plums, and a glass of acid Chablis between the heats, to keep his pluck up. He pulls stronger than you, old fellow, and that's saying a good deal for him; but, as Stephen says, ‘rolls about in the boat like a barrel of beer in Squashy and Washy's dray;’—that will soon be rectified.

“ The crew started two days before the race, and pulled gently down to Henley, merely trying a spirt now and then to prove their wind, when they came to a fine reach, and arrived at the Hart in splendid condition—their hands as hard as horn, and without a blister, owing to Stephen's training and superior beeswax. Not an

ounce of spare flesh among them, even in the Welshman ; but skin clear, and well strained over the starting muscles, with eyes as 'bright as bricks,' as Lord Nincompoop very ably remarked ; he's always great at a simile. Stephen ordered the beefsteaks, and presided over the cooking of them, to ensure their being properly *not* cooked ; that is, merely just shown the fire to produce sufficient perfume and outside colouring to convince the consumers they were not performing an act of cannibalism. To wash down this *morceau* each man was allowed half a pint of porter, and four glasses of port wine, and then Stephen undertook 'the character of chambermaid for that night only,' and saw every man safe in bed ; an example he followed himself, after putting on his usual nightcap—fourteen glasses of cold without, and twenty-eight cigars—judiciously observing as he bit one end off the last, and missed the candle with the other, in endeavouring to light it, 'I'm not a going to pull nor steer, and it's very hard if I can't have a little rational recreation !'

"It was an understood thing throughout the university that any man who chose might go to Henley, provided he asked leave of the Dean of his college, was back before twelve o'clock, and did not go in a tandem, which was very rigidly and very properly forbidden. Our Dean, you know, is a regular trump, and though he keeps his teams to their work—never double thongs them unnecessarily, and is always ready to grant all reasonable indulgences. Upon the present occasion, he showed his usual judgment and kindness, by bargaining with Costar and the other proprietors, for two coaches to carry all the men who wished to go to Henley and back at a certain moderate sum ; thereby ensuring comfort and economy too. I got leave to go in Kickum's trap, with three other men—Dick Downe, who was to be waggoner, and wanted to use the long reins ; but the Dean would not hear of it, though Dick brought up fifteen of his most intimate friends—presiding geniuses of the 'Tivy,' 'Tally-ho,' and other crack coaches, to certify to his proficiency in handling the ribbons ; and could have produced their wives and families to strengthen his case, if requisite, for Dick is too fond of all connected with coaching to limit his attentions to the male branches of the profession. It was no go—so we had a pair, and a pair of good ones—Woodpecker, that kicked Sam Strapper's leg in two, and old Peter that bit a piece out of Will Wisp's breeches.

"Our two friends, who rode behind, were Solomon, the son of Sir Solomon Stingo the great London porter brewer, who is generally known by the *sobriquet* of the Knight of Malta, and Tim Tripes, a fresh importation from Charterhouse ; and, of course, a good judge of London entire.

"Now, I confess to a little malice in our motives for picking out *these two men*, as we made sure of a good rise or two out of

them during the day. Solomon is a great ass, very rich and very stingy ; but he consented to pay pikes all the way, provided he was allowed to play a tune on a tin trumpet in every village we passed through, and to announce our approach to the various pikemen. He can't bear the slightest allusion to malt in any shape—small-beer, table-ale, XX, or stout, and would not be *seen* with a pewter in his hand, to get his governor a baronetcy. I knew from Tripes's talents in that line he would insist on pulling up at every public on the road to 'wash the dust out of his mouth,' and thereby drive the brewer's boy into hysterics or convulsions. Rise No. 1.

"You don't know Solomon, so I'll just give you an idea of him. Did you ever see a troop of yeomanry practising what is called *post* exercise ; that is, learning to cut off human heads by chopping with their swords at a lump of wood like a barber's block stuck on a barber's pole ? because that same pole with the block on it will give you no bad notion of Solomon's head and neck—shoulders he has none ; but to compensate for the deficiency of his upper build, he displays what the sailors call a remarkable breadth of beam amidships, and his legs appear as if he had obtained a grace of the house, or a dispensation from the vice-chancellor to wear the calf downwards. His face seems as if it had been badly cut out of a frosted savoy, and thatched with red-wheat straw. He has ferret-eyes, and a mouth evidently designed to dispose of asparagus by the bundle. His dress is in the worst possible *outré* taste of a Regent Street Sunday buck, with gold pins, rings, and chains, as ostentatiously displayed on all parts of his person as if he were training for bagman to a Brummagem jeweller. To crown all, on his nasty soapy red hair he wears a white beaver tastily turned up with green eaves. He is no beauty you'll allow.

"Tim Tripes, you know, as the best bow-oar in our boat—a little thickset fellow, with splendid shoulders and deltoids well developed, full of pluck and science—not Aristotle's but Mr. Jackson's running a little too much to middle from constitutional unwillingness to let go a quart of porter before he has seen the bottom of it ; a trick acquired from tibbling-out down the lane, *i. e.*, Charterhouse Lane, to the Red Cow ; the landlord of which noted public, generally a retired fighting-man, looked with sovereign contempt on every man and boy who 'couldn't swallow a kevert hoff at vonce.'

"As I knew the little town of Henley would be full to overflowing, I took the precaution of writing to an old college friend to secure stables or stalls for the prads. In reply he told me he had succeeded in doing so, at the Bell or the Bull, but from the horrid nature of his scrawl, resembling Egyptian hieroglyphics, Sanscrit, or Arabic characters, I could not tell which, so I left it to chance, or Providence—which some of our senators consider the same thing.

"Just before we set off, I saw Solomon's tiger busily employed

in wiping the moisture off his forehead (with the wash-leather, intended for polishing his master's wine-glasses), caused, it appeared, from over-exertion in trying to cram a large hamper under the trap, which Solomon kindly informed us, with as knowing a look as his ferrety eyes could convey, contained six bottles of gooseberry champagne, two of British brandy, and a large rook-pie, with bottled porter to match; 'for you know,' said he, 'they impose dreadful at inns, at public times, and we can slip out the back way, sit down in a field, and have a good dinner cheap, six bottles of sham champagne—it's very good though—twelve shillings;—two of brandy—best British—nine;—that's a guinea.' (Making use of his fingers for ready reckoners.) 'The rooks I shot at Nuneham a week ago, and got Mother Priggins to put a cover over them, in exchange for an old waistcoat—so that don't count. My governor stands porter—we can beg a bit of salt, and buy a twopenny buster at a baker's-shop. Now, if we had dined at the inn, we should have had to pay a guinea apiece, instead of the same sum between four of us—for I don't mean to stand treat except for the crow-tart and porter.'

"We did not oppose the stingy dog's whim then, but got all our rattletaps into the pheaton, as Kickum's ostler (not to vary from his kind) called it, and started as soon as Woodpecker and old Peter had done kicking and biting. They went off screwy at first, being groggy from overfast work; but as Kickum predicted, 'as soon as they got warm, and the *jint ile* began to act,' away they went, about twelve miles an hour, thus illustrating Virgil's '*vires acquirit eundo.*' We got along well till we came to the Harcourt Arms, at Nuneham. Solomon pulled out his tin trumpet, and had just commenced toot-toot-tooing, to the evident risk of blowing his front teeth out, when Tripes bawled out, 'Wo-ho!'—a sound Woodpecker and old Peter willingly obeyed, in spite of Dick's persuasions lashingly applied. 'I say, old fellows, you don't think I am going to pass the best glass of ale on the road? Hillo! Mother Bung! bring out four quarts of the best in the pewters! What's one apiece to begin with?' I turned round to get a glimpse of Solomon's face—he was looking daggers at Tripes, and holding the tin trumpet up in the air, like Mr. Harper preparing for a flourish, indicating a hostile descent on the head of his enemy—but Tim doubled his palm, which was ready extended for the malt, and merely observed, '*If you do,*' when the arm dropped listlessly by his side, and 'the music' into the road, where it performed a peculiar description of pirouette for two minutes in the dust to Solomon's horror—as he had to give a quart of beer to the blacksmith's man for wiping it with his dirty apron.

"'Here's to you, Mr. Musician,' cried Tripes; 'come, sink your family-failing for once, and taste the tap—won't you!—Then I'll do it for you.' The hand and head went gradually and beauti-

fully back together, until the initials of Mary Thompson were visible at the bottom of the cup, and he found breath to say, 'All right, Dick! the gentleman with red hair will pay you as we come back, Mother Bung, by! by!'

"Solomon swore it was a shame, and said he'd be blowed if he would—and sulked and grumbled to Dorchester, where his conceit of his musical abilities got the better of his temper, and he blew his tin vociferously, till the White Hart appeared in view, when Tripes again cried, 'Woho! capital porter, here. Landlord! four pints best stout.' It was only three miles from our last pull up, so we positively declined. But Tripes insisted on *his* allowance, taking especial care, in handing it into the trap, to drop a teacupful over Solomon's new white kerseymeres, and drank it leisurely, to enjoy, with one eye, the spiteful look of vindictiveness depicted on his victim's face, as he carefully removed the 'stain upon his honour' with a refulgent red pocket-handkerchief, till Tripes cried out, 'All right, the gentleman in beery breeches will pay as we come back.'

"About a mile further is a little place called Shillingford, with two road-side houses just opposite to each other, where Tripes wanted to stop again to see whether a proper sense of competition had stimulated the respective landlords to brew something a little better than common, but his usual 'wo-ho!' would not have succeeded, for Dick was awake to his plans by this time, and was cutting into Woodpecker and old Peter unmercifully, had not the water-troughs on either side of the road proved as tempting to the nags as the words 'real home brewed' did to Tripes. There we were! Woodpecker, who was on the near side, making for the left-hand trough, and old Peter doggedly determined to reach the other on the right—each horse being ably assisted in his struggles by the ostler and landlord of the house for which he was showing so decided a preference. When the landladies endeavoured to seduce the gentleman on their sides, Dick dropped his whip in despair, singing 'How happy could I be with either!' and the 'war of words' between the adherents of the *centre gauche* and the *centre droit* was at length allayed by Tripes calling out 'A plague on both your houses—Mrs. left-hand house! bring two quarts of *your* best! Mrs. right-hand ditto! ditto!—Left-hand ostler!—right-hand ditto!—the gentleman in the harmonic line will give you sixpence apiece to bring each of those horses a pot of beer, and if they won't drink it, you can do it for them, and favour them with a bucket of water in exchange.' Solomon's demurrer was useless—we all swore we had no money, so he paid for all, taking his change to the uttermost farthing, and grumbling 'Here's a pretty go—I'm to stand Sam all day?'

"We got off again as quickly as we could, for fear we should

be involved in a discussion between Tripes and the opposition landlords, as to which was the best brewer; a question he would not have ventured to decide without critically investigating the contents of every barrel in their cellars. However, he seemed willing to move on, as he knew that Benson was only a mile and a half further, and that we meant to stop and feed ourselves and the prads at the White Hart.

"As ill-luck would have it, just as we turned into the gateway of that inn in good style, Solomon melodiously saluting the house with evident self-satisfaction, and anticipating the praises of 'the boys,' the Alert was standing there, with the horses put to, and Black Will in the act of mounting the box with the reins and whip in his off-hand. Whether his team had no 'music in their souls,' or were uxorious, and had a horror of horns, I can't say; but they all four began dancing out of tune and the yard, before Will had gained the box, whence he 'came down with a run,' as the Jack tars say, and was dragged some little distance by the reins before the horses could be stopped.

"Now those who know the '*Black Prince*,' as Mr. Bowers was called when he worked on that coach (though one wag was wicked enough to suggest that the title was acquired from his having been seen at a battle of *A-gin-court*), must be well aware that his excessive politeness would be rather tried by so unpleasant an ejectionment from 'his seat.' He rose gracefully—gave the reins and whip to the horsekeeper—made signs to boots to rub him down, and then walked deliberately up to poor Solomon, who had been viewing these proceedings with feelings verging on insanity, and touching his hat with his usual urbanity, and putting his heavy foot on the horn, and crushing it flat, said, 'You Spooney!—next time you wants to practise on that there bugle, perch yourself somewhere or other, where there ain't no horses nor hasses to hear you.' Then turning round to Dick, who was looking deprecatingly, and shaking him by the hand much more affectionately than his own father would or could have done, he whispered loudly enough for the whole assembly to hear, 'Dick! I thought as how you was too far advanced to put such an hass as that into a guard's place!—Why, his werry looks 'ud ruin the best consarn on the road.' Dick made an humble apology, and an offer of a libation, which Will accepted, in the shape of two glasses of cold brandy-and-water, concentrated into one, and then mounted his box and drove off for Henley, with his fourteen outside and six in—the supernumeraries being *shouldered*, 'in course!'

"Solomon was too deeply engaged in trying (fortunately without success—tin being at a premium in Benson) to procure a new musical instrument, to join us in a quiet kidney and a glass of Curaçoa, though we made him pay, under the former successful plea of



having no tin like himself, and a threat of Shrub's suggested by ourselves, that he would detain him, and have him up before a beak, if he did not. Dick was so anxious to overtake the Alert, and beat his dark friend into Henley that poor Woodpecker and old Peter were forced to kick and bite in evident disgust at being put-to before they had properly digested their provender.

"Talking of provender, I must tell you a story : A juvenile commercial, out on his first journey, arrived at the inn to which he had been recommended by his predecessor, and, to come it double strong, disdained to use the language of other men, telling the ostler to 'provender his quadruped while he discussed his chop.'

"Mr. Rub'emdown, not knowing the precise interpretation of this oracular order, mentioned it to an old traveller in the Manchester line, who wickedly explained it to mean, 'crop his mane and ears close, and cut his tail down to a short dock,' which was accordingly done, much to the ostler's satisfaction, under the full anticipation of a double fee for despatch.

"When the gentleman ordered his gig, and having paid his score was about to mount, he swore in a most indecent manner that 'that 'orse was not his'n, but another man's!' nor would he be convinced to the contrary until Rub'emdown fetched the stray attributes, and replaced them as well as he could, making his identity undeniable. I need not say, he never showed at the same house again.

"We got over the next five miles without a check, although it is all against collar. Dick jockeyed Tripes at Nettlebed, by jerking his elbow violently against his mouth, just as we got to the Red Lion, thereby preventing the usual 'Wo-ho!' and by tipping Woodpecker and Peter a 'short Tommy,' i. e., sticking an enormous large shirt-pin, in the shape of a coach-pole and splinter-bars, into their quarters, which engaged their attention too much to allow them to see the water-trough by the road-side, we got close up to the Alert just at the commencement of the fair-mile, where Dick began to make play to pass Will. The old stager was too deep for him, and commenced the jostling system, which so amazed our charioteer, that seeing what he conceived a good opening to turn out on the turf, and give Will the go-by, he tried it on, and upset us very easily, but ludicrously, into a *ci-devant* gravel-pit, to the great amusement of every one but ourselves. However, the only harm done was from a violent kick of Woodpecker's, judiciously administered on Solomon's centre of gravity, and the ingratitude of old Peter, who bit a piece out of Tripe's coat-tail, as he was kindly endeavouring to set him on his legs again. Amidst the shouts of the clods, 'we up and after them,' getting into the town just as Will had touched his hat and his fees.

"We pulled up at the Bell, and found my friend had got us a

capital two-stalled stable, in which we saw our nags comfortably locked up with full racks and mangers, and toddled off to the Hart to see how the crews looked, and hear the opinions as to the result. We ordered dinner at five, as the race was to take place at eight, without saying a word to Solomon, and on our return from viewing the natives and the boats, found a nice dish of stewed eels, fried perch, framed with gudgeons, cold lamb and salad, and roasted pigeons, with lots of Reading asparagus upon the table. Solomon was missing; and just as we had finished our fish, and the 'premier pop' of Champagne was heard, he made his appearance, to tell us 'he had fixed on a nice quiet corner for the crow-lart and gooseberry,' but bolted again when he saw we were otherwise engaged, looking exasperated at our extravagance, and buttoning up both his trousers' pockets, as a hint we were to pay for ourselves this time.

"But to the race itself. About seven o'clock the rival crews pulled gently down to the starting-place, about two miles below Henley bridge, distinguished by their colours. Oxford sported true blue; Cambridge, pink; and every thing was arranged by the umpires in a quiet, gentlemanly way, without any wrangling. There was a toss for choice of sides, which was won by the Cambridge men; and of course they chose the bank on their bows, as the river forms a rather sharp curve to the left, between the locks and the town. There was to be no fouling, and the victory was to belong to the party who passed first under the bridge.

"Just before the start every inch of ground that could command a view of the river on either side was occupied by gazers of all sorts and sizes—lords and ladies, Jans and Jinnies, saints and sinners, cockneys and country bumpkins—it was an universal holiday in that part of the world; and miss Martineau might have applied her preventive check, without any fear of "restraining the population" upon this occasion.

"The Oxford boat belonged to Baliol Coll., built by Davis and King; the Cambridge was a bran-new turn out of Serle's, and one of the neatest I ever saw: though it struck me, when I examined her on shore as she was being greased, that she was too crank for the crew that were to pull in her—all men of weight and inches; perhaps two finer crews were never seen; but our men were rather the longer and lighter in their *corpuscula* of the two.

"At eight o'clock precisely, the order was given for 'Up with your oars;' and in two minutes, at the word 'Off,' they dropped them in beautifully—as one man; but a cry of 'False start,' owing to some little dispute about the exact distance from blade to blade, caused them to backwater, and prepare again. In five minutes the referees made all right, and 'Off she goes,' was again cried. Away they went! and before they got three hundred yards, my experienced

eye could see that my conjecture about the London boat was quite correct. She dipped in the bows every stroke, as if they were going to pull her under water, and rocked fearfully until they got into good time. The short stroke too, with the back quite straight, and the arms doing all the work, would not do on *smooth* water, compared with the long pull *through* the water, and quick feather *out* of it, of the Oxford men, who gained rapidly upon, and soon passed their rivals, taking the inside place. I was close upon them both, and could hear the steady cry of the steersman, 'Go it, my blues—beautifully pulled!—three minutes more, and your work's done—they lose ground (water he meant) every moment—steady!—no hurry—keep the old stroke!—backs down on the thwarts,' from the Oxford boat; and the 'By George, we're beaten!—quicken your stroke—don't you go back so, you No. 3—pull for Heaven's sake!' of the Cambridge.

"I pulled up about a quarter of a mile from the bridge, being quite satisfied how it was going, and thoroughly blown from the speed and nature of my exertions; for no one, who has not tried it, knows what 'running up' with an eight-oar means. The snobs were wofully taken to that day, being shoved, unreservedly, some into the river, others into ditches by the more *au fait* Oxonians.

"A tremendous shout, and the striking up of the church bells, proclaimed the victory was won by the Oxford men, with one hundred yards to spare!!! I jumped into a punt with poor Stephen, and, by dint of his superior generalship, got on the opposite bank in time to see our crew land; and the best proof of their excellent condition was, that not one man was so distressed as to be obliged to be helped out of the boat. Our opponents came in rather more distressed, but still not much the matter. Such a shouting was still going on, that it was impossible to hear anything said, until Stephen thundered out, 'Now, my true blues! as much porter as you like!' And I heard one of the victors say, as he set an emptied quart-cup on the table at Mrs. Dixon's, 'If nectar did not mean London porter, he dit not know what did.'

"You, who have been so often at such scenes on the banks of Isis, will easily imagine the whole affair; nor will you require me to describe the supper given by the vanquished to the conquerors—the compliments mutually given and received—the toasts drank—and last, though by no means *least*, the quantity and quality of liquids absorbed. More unflinching candidates for the favour of father Bacchus never drained Cyathi. Nor were the muses neglected—'Nine times nine' was the cry of the night! I shall finish my letter by recording the final adventures of our *partie carrée*.

"As for myself, I had an invitation to take coffee, at the house of my friend whom I have mentioned before as the procurer of our nags' temporary domiciles, and being a little bit of a vocalist, passed

two or three pleasant hours standing over a pianoforte and a very fine girl, to whom I was well contented to sing second. However, when ten o'clock arrived, I tore myself away from my fair chantress, or enchantress, whichever you please to call her, in order to get Dick, Tripes, and Solomon ready to start—for we had promised the Dean not to be later than twelve o'clock. This, however, I found to be no easy matter, and returned to my friend's house after half an hour's vain search, to consult him on the best means of getting out of my difficulties. One of the parties relieved me speedily, if not pleasantly. Just fancy my horror on hearing a scuffling sort of noise at the door of the drawing-room, which was filled with company, and, seeing my friend Tripes very bosky, holding on by the doorpost on either side, and in a husky hiccupping tone requesting to be informed 'if our drag was at the Bell or the Bull?—the Bull or the Bell?' adding, for the information of the ladies, that 'he'd tried every tap in the town, and never tasted such very bad beer in all his life.' I ran at him vicious, and carried him *vi et armis*, with my friend's assistance, in spite of his spiteful kicks and bites, into the stable-yard, where we laid him on a truss of straw, and sponged his head with cold pump-water, which soon had the desired effect. On his recovery he laid it all to the beer being brewer's trash, and requested to taste my friend's private tap, assuring him half a pint would be the making of him. My expostulations were useless; and, while my host was gone to give the necessary, or rather unnecessary orders, he entertained me with a discussion on the merits of a large two-handed pump, down Charterhouse, and its wonderful efficacy in remedying the effects of Red Cow—'pumps up ten gallons a minute, and as cold as ice—hiccup—never knew it fail!'

"I got him safe to the Bell at last, and locked him in with Woodpecker and old Peter, giving the ostler strict charge not to supply him with any liquids but water. Then I proceeded on another voyage of discovery, and arrived at the White Hart just in time to see Will start with about half his cargo. With his usual judgment he had stowed the soberest men outside; the very drunken ones, seven in number, were compressed inside with the doors screwed up to prevent their opening them, and tumbling out on the road, and the windows nailed down for fear they should cut themselves with the glasses. No objection was made to these arrangements, for none of the seven could articulate. When, however, he proceeded to strap three or four *half* bosky men to the roof of the coach, so firm and strong a resistance was made, that he found it necessary to borrow three of Bowling's kicking-straps, and a pair of darbies (*i. e.*, handcuffs) of the constable, before his endeavours were crowned with success. I inquired if he had seen Dick lately, and I heard with joy that he was then in the bar smoking a pipe with the coachman and guard of the Stroud mail *down*. He was sober as

yet, as he had been drinking tea with the coachman's wife in his absence—coffee with the guard's sister, and was going to play at cribbage or dominoes with another jehu's daughter, but left her in disgust when he discovered that her governor only *druv a pair*.

"I assisted him in finishing his glass of *twist*, which is coach-Latin for half gin and half brandy-and-water, and carried him off rather sulky, to assist in the search for Solomon. All our endeavours, for a time, were fruitless; he had not been seen since he left the yard with the hamper under his arm by any one. It struck me all of a sudden, that, having intimated an intention of dining economically *al fresco*, he had made for the fields in the rear of the house, and, as it was a brilliant moonlight night, we explored in that direction with success; for, being attracted by faint hip! hurrahs! uttered in 'childish trebles,' we directed our steps towards them, and discovered two little chimney-sweepers and a charity schoolboy, engaging themselves on the crow-tart and goose-berry wine of poor Solomon, who was lying dead drunk on his back under the bushes, lovingly embracing a fly-driver, quite as drunk as himself.

"Dick, in spite of Mr. Martin's act, pulled him by the legs out of the bushes, with a stoical disregard of the lacerations caused by the thorns, and, so strong was the sudden attachment formed between the two votaries of Bacchus, that in dragging Solomon out, he drew the fly-man with him.

"I afterwards learned that Solomon, finding the hamper rather heavy and inconvenient to carry, had engaged the assistance of the fly-man, who was idling about the yard, to carry it for him to his 'quiet corner,' under the promise of a bottle of porter as a reward. The flavour of the porter pleased his palate so well, that he returned after an hour's time, to offer his services in carrying the hamper back, in hopes of obtaining a second edition. To his great delight he found Solomon so far gone from original sobriety, and in so generous a humour, that he unhesitatingly accepted his invitation to partake of the remainder of the crow-tart and a bottle of goose-berry. Though the rooks were not much the better for having been killed a week, and the steak on which they rested was very tough, they contrived between them to demolish nearly all of the pie and the porter; the wine, however, took a very sudden and powerful effect upon them, which they endeavoured to remedy by imbibing nearly all the British brandy. The result was, both were so beastly drunk that they fell asleep in each other's arms. The little chummies and the charity-boy found them by accident, as they were cutting round the town the back way to see the fireworks—being supposed by their fond parents to be safe in bed—and thought it a pity that two such intemperate beings should be exposed to further temptation if they chanced to recover; so they charitably resolved

to remove the *irritamenta malorum* by finishing the little that was left. When we came up they were each engaged in guggling a bottle of gooseberry, to 'the health of the gen'l'man as did n't know how to stop when he'd had enough.'

"We left them to take care of the hamper and the fly-man (who had to drive the Mayor of Maidenhead, his wife, and nine little aspirants for the mace to their home after the fireworks, which had just commenced, were over) and carried Solomon into the stable to Tripes, who was now nearly sober, and promised to behave well for the rest of the night, if we would let him out.

"What was to be done? it was folly to think of starting with Solomon in such a condition; so we agreed to let Tripes physic him, and stay one hour to see the effect of the dose, the fireworks, and the Stroud mail start. Tripes ran into the Bell in a state of ecstasy, and returned with a jug of hot water, into which he was industriously stirring the contents of two mustard-pots; this he managed in a most scientific way, to administer as a drench to poor Solomon after he had removed his stock and unbuttoned his shirt collar: we then set him up in a corner and left him.

"The fireworks were very fine, but the night was finer and spoiled their effect; it was too light for lights, so we humoured Dick and ran to see the mail start. We were just in time—for there were about twenty Oxford men harnessed to it by ropes and all sorts of contrivances, dragging it off at about ten miles an hour—to the horror of Dick's friend the coachman, the insides and outs, and the guard who had to run with the bags in one hand and the pair of wheelers in the other, nearly a mile and a half before he could catch them.

"Tripes, who was gazing maliciously at the large image fixed over the inn-door, intended to represent a white hart (a sketch from nature, having golden hoofs, red eyes, nose, and ears, enormous green antlers, and no tail) suggested to about forty or fifty surrounding undergraduates, that it was positively cruel to keep so noble an animal in a situation where he could get nothing to eat or drink, and proposed with their assistance to remove him to a more natural lay in Mr. Maitland's park. This act of disinterested benevolence was speedily effected by means of a cart-rope, amidst the cheers of a sympathizing mob of snobs, and the useless expostulations of the landlord.

"An energetic *special*, in his zeal for the maintenance of order, collared Tripes, who hates an authority at all times, and was not likely to submit quietly to a great overgrown baker, because he had a constable's staff in his hand, so he replied to his threat of 'pulling him up before the beaks,' by hitting him exceedingly hard in the wind, and calling out for 'a ring!' which was quickly formed, and the special carried home in less than five minutes after,

with his face smashed to a pulp, and his molars rendered unfit for mastication.

"We took Stephen Davis's advice, and 'cut our lucky' at once. The dose had fortunately operated successfully on Solomon, who was just able to sit up in the trap when properly tied in with a halter; so we paid our bill, and told Dick 'to slack his hand' all the way to Benson, where we meant to sup. We arrived there about half-past twelve, and found them just shutting up. The cook was standing in the kitchen flattering himself his work was over for the night, and about to wash down the fatigues of a hard day with a glass of warm brandy-and-water, when Dick rushed in, seized the goblet, and swallowed its contents, before the puzzled *chef de cuisine* could stretch out his greasy fist to prevent him. He was so disgusted at the unceremonious usage he had met with, that he rudely declined broiling any ham for us, until Tripes knocked him down with the flat side of a 'best York,' weighing two or three and twenty pounds, seized his large knife, and proceeded to act as his deputy at the gridiron. This brought him to his senses and the fire. His ingenuity was displayed to our satisfaction, and his injured honour repaired by an unlimited order for brandy-and-water for himself and the waiter. When both these worthies were disposed of under the dresser, we yielded to the fascinating request of the barmaid and Mrs. Shrub, 'to let them have a *little* sleep,' and set off home about four in the morning.

"On the road, we, that is, Dick and I, who were neither of us much amiss, were engaged in forming our plans for apologizing satisfactorily to the Dean. On one point we fully agreed: to lay all the blame on poor Solomon, who was fast asleep, lashed to the back of the trap and Tripes's arm: he, Tripes, being rather dozy, and afraid of falling out if he indulged in a nap without such due precautions.

"We got to college about five o'clock, and found the gates just opened, hurried Solomon to bed, undressing and locking him safe in his rooms; we then took his splash new coat, and the rest of his dress, and walked to the nearest meadow, where we immersed them in a green muddy ditch, and then trailed them along the dusty road; giving them a friendly stamping with our dirty boots now and then, by way of variety, and finally strewed them about his rooms in drunken disorder. We then obtained a commons of new bread from another man's rooms, and extracting a piece of crumb about the size of a cricket-ball, entered Solomon's bedroom, and without his being at all conscious of the fact, tied it firmly on his right cheek with a white pocket-handkerchief to represent a swelled face; and by a judicious commixture of red and black ink, applied to his right optic, succeeded in making him a very effective black eye.

"All these arrangements being completed, I ran across quad to the Dean's rooms. He was up and dressing for chapel. I put on a very long face, and told him a very piteous tale of the trouble Solomon had given us all the day, and of his obstinate determination to have his share of driving, though unqualified for the art; the result of which was, that he had upset himself into a gravel-pit, after we had fortunately jumped out to avoid the danger which we saw was otherwise inevitable.

" 'Is he hurt?'

" 'A little, sir, but we have put him to bed, and he is now asleep; will you look at him, and say if we can do any thing more for him?'

" 'Certainly.' He returned with me, and found every thing as I had said—being satisfied from the horrid object he saw in bed, and the state of the 'clothing department,' that 'we must have experienced a great deal of annoyance from a man who gave way to such a disgusting vice as intoxication.'

"So ended our day at Henley, old fellow, and so ends the letter of

"Yours, as ever,

"WILLIAM WYDEAWAKE.

"P. S. Solomon's governess and two sisters, who had invited themselves to the commemoration, arrived very opportunely. They found him just as we had left him, and are all three at this present moment in violent convulsions—dreading the irreparable loss of the 'dear sweet boy,' and relieving their consanguinal feelings, in the intervals between the fits, by threatening to 'take the law against the naughty young gentlemen who had seduced their beloved relative—the brutes—into so degrading and dangerous a state.' Tripes 'wishes they may get it,' and Dick confidently affirms that 'that cock won't fight.'"

#### CHAPTER IV.

WHEN Dr. Puffs, of——, discovered by the information of a "—d kind friend," as Sheridan says, that I had ventured to describe the little interview which we had near St. John's Terrace, with its causes and effects, his rage knew no bounds. He read my No. III. to the end, and stormed and grinned, and would have stamped and sworn, had not a twinge of gout prevented the former, and a sense of decency the latter. He would have doubtless burnt the *N. M. M.* in his anger, if it had not cost him three shillings and sixpence, and fires were out—of season. He displayed, too, a degree of weakness,



at which, in so old an Oxford man, I must confess I am surprised. Instead of keeping quiet and allowing his friends to talk *of* him, and not *to* him, upon a subject, which he felt to be disagreeable in the extreme, he gave positive orders to his scout to lay the object of his detestation on the table, within his reach, for he is still confined to his easy chair (as he calls the seat in which he sits when he is uneasy) that he may compel every one who calls upon him to condole with him on his ailments, to read the article aloud to him; the consequence of this injudicious conduct is, that the Dr. is much more talked about than he otherwise would have been. It seems that he does not so much care about being thought an angry man, or one prone to excesses in the arts of eating and drinking, as the being *misrepresented*—so he has the courage to call it—as a person so incommoded with fat, as to be unable to rub his gouty toe.

He was foolish enough to send to the Bursar of St. Peter's College—the best friend I have, and request him to call upon him; alleging, in excuse for giving him that trouble, that he was suffering from a slight attack of rheumatism, brought on by the excessive heat of the weather.

Our Bursar accordingly went, not in the least anticipating the warm reception he met with—much warmer than the weather—the doctor's *causa mali*—but thinking to have a little chat about the commemoration concerts and other matters, with perhaps a little scandal about the young ladies, to which old gentlemen are generally addicted, but old bachelors particularly.

Upon giving a masonic rap at the door to let him know he was not a dún, a voice unusually sharp and loud bade him “come in,” which he obeyed as usual, and found Dr. Puffs seated, with an expression of face consonant with his voice—his injured foot carefully pillowed on an ease-and-comfort leg-rester, and the memorable crutch-headed cane in his hand. By his side stood a small round table, with a bottle of sherry, and a very large wine-glass upon it—for he had had an early light dinner of green-pea soup, salmon, lamb, and young potatoes, two little *entremets*, a lobster salad, and some *fromage de Neufchâtel*, and was just taking advantage of his physician's permission to take four glasses of white wine—but, to prolong the enjoyment, meant to take them in eight *half* glasses. He had drunk a bottle of Dublin *porter* with his dinner, as the medical man had only forbidden *beer*.

“Be seated, sir,” said he to our Bursar, who was walking up to shake hands with him. “Be seated, sir;” at the same time bowing in a very dignified and distant manner, as low as he could, which was not very low—for his double chin and prominent protuberance of middle rendered the operation difficult, and made him feel choky.

“I have sent for you, sir, to complain of the infamous treatment, I have experienced at the pen of that old twaddle, Peter Priggins;

he has exposed himself and me too;" and the crutch descended emphatically upon the rug.

"Really," replied our Bursar, "I don't see—"

"Don't see!—you *won't* see, sir; have you read his stupid, dull, foolish, disreputable, ill-concocted stuff?"

"Certainly, and I think—"

"Ay, *think*—that's more than he does; there is not a *thought* in him, except of annoying me—I don't care a—a—a farthing, sir, about his falsehoods as to my being gouty and greedy, proud and passionate, but to say that I am fat!—obese!—unwieldy! when I always button my own gaiters—except during an attack of rheumatism—is such an outrageous example of mendacity, that I'll—I'll—"

Our Bursar benevolently interrupted him, to give him time to recover his breath, by inquiring what he would do.

"Why, sir, I'll *not* have him rusticated! I'll *not* have him expelled! I'll *not* have him discommoded, but I'll have him excommunicated! I'll have him fined! put into the pillory! I'll have him transported! Nay, I'll be—not blessed! if I don't have him hanged!"

The peculiar apoplectic hue to which I alluded in my last Number spread rapidly over his face; the foam rushed from his mouth, like a pig's in a passion; he raised his crutch higher and higher, as he grew more loud and energetic, and at the climax threw it from his hand (to enable him to point to his gullet with his finger, as he laid his head over his left shoulder, to mimic my last moments) and knocked down the bottle of sherry, the large glass, and the table on which they stood. Nor did the mischief end there. His favourite tom-cat, that was sleeping on the rug, received the weight of his master's displeasure, and, in order to extricate himself from the superincumbent mahogany, fastened his talons in the gaiterless calf of the angry gentleman's healthy leg—his temper—I mean Tom's—not being so serene as usual, from the fact of one of the undergraduates having paid him off for the annoyances his guttural amours caused him nightly, by pouring half a pint of turpentine on his back, and setting light to it. The doctor's scream of agony, in the key of A sharp in alt, brought the Bursar to his assistance; who only made matters worse, for, not knowing the mechanism of a T rest, he tripped up that ticklish bit of furniture, and the gouty foot fell *flap* to the ground.

The screams in alt were now changed for groans in the base, and so intense was the agony depicted on his face that it shocked our Bursar, and called forth the sympathies of Tom, who "withdrew his claws," as they say in parliament, and shewed his sensibility by rubbing his sore back against his master's pimply nose—walking backwards and forwards over his stomach, to prolong the pleasing pastime.

"Rub my leg! rub my leg!" cried the doctor, when he had recovered strength enough to throw Tom out of the window, and wind enough to speak, "Rub my leg, my dear sir! Peter Priggins is right, I can *not* stoop so low!"

Fortunately his scout, who saw Tom flying out of the window, suspected his master was in one of his tantrums, and, coming up, released him from his distressing situation, and our Bursar left him, promising for me that I did not mean to annoy him or any body else.

Kickum too, the hackman, was indignant because I exposed the kicking and biting propensities of Woodpecker and old Peter, "two osses as had yarn'd him more money nor any two in Hoxford. Was their characters to be taken away as hif they was hanimals hof ha hinferior horder? I'll write to Priggins hall habout hil."

So he did, and here is a copy of his very polite communication.

"To Mr. P. Priggins,

"St. Peter's College-lane.

"Mr. Kickum the livery-stable kipper's very respektfull kumpliments to Mr. Priggins, and if you venters to take away any more of my horses kracters, and injer my trade, He's blest if he won't stick a pitchfork into yor hinde quarters, and larrup your thick head with the besum,

"Your humble servant,

CALEB KICKUM."

"*Jewly 3.*"

Those who know me will readily conceive that I treated this vulgar production of the hackman with the contempt it deserved; for although Kickum may be a good judge of horseflesh (a *bonus judex carnis equi*, as one of my former masters turned it in his spectator exercise) his note will shew that he has no right to interfere in *litter*-ary matters, out of his own stables.

I am compensated for these little annoyances, to which all great writers are exposed, by the approbation of persons whom I consider superior to any other class of men in the world—the members of the University of Oxford. I am also inclined to think, allowing for the envy they feel at my so totally eclipsing them, that my fellow scouts are highly pleased that one of their body should throw a lustre on the rest; at least Dusterly says, that "the hopinions at the Shirt hand Shotbag hare hunanimous hin hasserting that Hi ham han honour to hus hall, hand that my harticles himprove hevery time," which is very flattering.

I generally go into college once or twice a day—to the buttery;—not that I have any actual business there; but it seems so natural to me after so many years of service to leave my hat in the porter's

lodge, have a gossip, and taste the tap, that I cannot resist it. I feel an interest in the college that none but an old servant can feel, though I leave my own *interest*—my weekly one pound one—entirely to our *Principal*. I cannot say that I associate with undergraduates so willingly as I had used to do. A race has arisen that know not Peter, and my suggestions and expostulations are not listened to with the respectful attention they were wont to be. It was only the other day, as I was kindly informing a young gentleman, whose allowance from his father, a country clergyman with a large family, is 200*l.* per annum, that twelve pair of buckskins, and six of top-boots, was rather too large an order for a man of his income, when, instead of receiving the hint as it was meant, he threatened to “knock a hole right through me,” and called me a “meddling old ass.” I have even been subjected to the disagreeable operation of having the beer I have been drinking jerked violently over my face and white tie, and pins stuck into the calves of my legs, which are decidedly large for so old a man, to ascertain that they were not *sham*.

On this account I do not visit the undergraduates’ rooms so often as formerly; but I still frequent the common-room, where my son is acting as my successor, “*filius tali patre dignus*,” and offer my assistance, as deputy corkscrew, when strangers assemble thickly; though, like all young men, he fancies he can do very well without me.

By the senior members I am received with the same benignity as ever, though there is a very great difference to be found in the common-room now to what it was formerly—less sociability and an assumption of superior sanctity by men who—but I never did split, and I won’t do so now—only I *could* show that some very bad saints are manufactured out of very good sinners. I often smile as I stand behind the screen in the common-room (very handy things those screens are) and hear some of the hardest drinkers in their undergraduate days speaking with pious enthusiasm of the decrease of inebriety, and attributing it to their precepts and example, instead of to the introduction of light continental wines and late dinners. In my younger days, the men used to dine at three o’clock, and had little or nothing to do but drink until six o’clock, and then sally out to the coffee-house, kick up a row in the streets, and home to broiled bones and mushrooms at nine; ending the night with bishop, cardinal, and egg-flip.

Coffee-houses are now annihilated, and six o’clock dinners and claret are seldom followed by suppers. There is also much better accommodation for evening walks round Oxford than there had used to be, which will account for less drinking; but the members of the hand-in-hand club, as the *supersancti* have been properly denominated, are very much mistaken if they fancy that there

are not men now as gay and jovial as they were once themselves.

Great allowances are to be made for young men in the heyday of their youth, and just freed from the restraint of school, with the command of a little ready money and unlimited credit. While boys, they fancy themselves men (for many enter at fifteen), and rush into indulgences and extravagances, which they would not do if they were a little older. The system of cramming them too much at schools, so as to leave little or nothing to be done at college (except they read for a class, which not one in fifty does if he be a man of property in *prospectu*), gives them a great deal of spare time which must be filled up somehow; and how it is filled up, those who have known Oxford longest know best.

One of the many humorous scenes of by-gone days which crowd my memory, now occurs to me. I shall describe it and call it,

#### MR. SINGLETON SLIPSLOP'S GREAT-GO PARTY.

The hero of my tale, Mr. Singleton Slipslop, was of that species usually called "nice young men"—exceedingly effeminate in person, and over-particular in dress—showing a decided *penchant* for jewellery and fine clothes, with an inordinate taste for perfumery. He would have made a capital *drag* across country—even with the wind due north and a cloudless sky.

There is an old adage, that, when there is but one child, there are sure to be three fools, and the truth of it was fully proved in the family of the Slipslops of Slop Hall, in the moist part of the county of Lincoln. Slipslop *père* was a man of very retired habits, and of a studious turn of mind, seldom wishing to go out into society; which was fortunate, as the fens were not in his days remarkable for the practicability of their roads. He had never thought of a woman since his mother's death, much less of marrying one; but the idea of taking unto himself a wife was suggested to him by one of two circumstances—the reading of a treatise on "Polygamy among the Turks," in which were some lusciously-drawn descriptions of a harem, or a hint from his lawyer, Mr. Cute, that it was a pity so fine a landed property, though it was mostly under water, should go out of the male branch of the Slipslop family.

Mr. Cute saw that the hint had been partly taken, and invited his wealthy client to visit him, and talk the matter over after a quiet dinner and glass of wine. They dined alone, and the subject of conversation was renewed; the lawyer giving several very glowing descriptions of the joys and delights of wedlock, which he was fully justified in doing, as he had been married for fifteen years, and his wife was dead. Though Slipslop's imagination was one of the damp gunpowder species, the match was so perseveringly applied by the

lawyer, that it began to ignite ; and when once alight, blazed away like the devil—a gunpowder devil I mean.

At this interesting moment the tea and coffee were introduced, and with them Miss Catherine Cute, a young lady having sixteen years, with a pink and white face, and frock, and an irresistible bewitchingness in her pretty blue eyes. The bait was thrown at a judicious moment ; Slipslop nibbled, and finally bit—though some said he was bitten. When young men or women marry persons older than themselves—for money, they are generally applauded for their prudence ; whereas their aged partners are called old fools for their pains. This I think wrong. A young man may find courage enough for a wife of any age ; but for an old man to marry an old woman is as bad as eating a boiled sucking-pig without salt. A man on the further side of fifty requires a condiment of some sort.

Great were the rejoicings at Slop Hall amongst the guests who could *wade* thither, when Miss C. Cute became Mrs. Slipslop ; but still greater when Mr. Epicene, the man-midwife, announced the birth of, and parson Prattle, vicar of Slippery-cum-Sloppery (the parish in which Slop Hall was located), baptized, the hero of my tale and the heir of the entail, Mr. Singleton Slipslop.

Whether it was the surprise at finding himself a real father, or the unwonted quantity of wine he drank to celebrate the event, which affected his health, I cannot say ; but the melancholy fact is, that he died soon after, leaving Mrs. S. a widow, young, but not disconsolate, with 4000*l.* per annum, and Master Singleton a baby in longs, an orphan.

Although the widow might, by the conditions of the will, wisely drawn up by her father, have married again without any diminution of her income, until her son came of age, she did not do so ; being, probably, doubtful whether a second marital would make his exit as speedily, or treat her as indulgently, as her first had done.

It was not likely that a young gentleman, situated as Master Singleton was—an only child of his mother, and she a widow, and heir to four thousand a year, would easily escape being spoiled, crammed, and physicked. The tame rabbit-keeping and nursery-governess system was successfully persevered in until he reached his fourteenth year ; when old lawyer Cute, thinking it a very swell thing to talk of “ my grandson at Eton,” resolutely insisted on sending him to that royal establishment, to the joy of the son, who had visions of noble playfellows before his eyes, and the consternation of his mother, who had some doubts in her mind as to improvement of his morals resulting from such associations.

Grandpère was inflexible, and away went poor Singleton in a carriage and four with the old butler and mamma’s blessing, his pockets full of money, his eyes of tears, his boxes of nice new clothes, cakes, toys, jams, and jellies. A week had scarcely elapsed,

when his anxious mother received a letter sealed with a bit of chewed bread, bearing upon it the mark of the Eton post, and some very dirty fingers. She opened it hastily and easily, and the contents were very satisfactory, as the reader will see.

“ My dear Mamma,

“ I can’t stay here, and I won’t stay here, and if you don’t fetch me away, I’ll run away. As soon as old Corkscrew, the butler, had left me at the dame’s house, I was shoved into a field among five hundred of the rudest and naughtiest boys you ever saw. They called me spoony, and green, and all sorts of names, and knocked me about, and kicked me till I cried, and then they kicked me for crying ; *that* I should not care so much about, but they got and eat all my cakes and sweetmeats, broke all my toys, burnt a great hole in my best white jean trousers with a red-hot poker, pulled all the basket buttons off my skyblue jacket, and chucked my new hat up into a high elm, where it is still. I have to get up at 5 o’clock every morning, clean my master’s shoes and boots, knives and forks, make his breakfast, and go without my own. I have not had a mouthful of dinner since I came. My linen is all torn, and I’ve got two black eyes and a swelled nose, and I would have run home before now, only I’ve got no money left—the ten guineas you gave me being spent to pay for my footing at the Christopher, and a new barber’s pole which another boy stole, and swore it was me. If you don’t send for me to-morrow I shall drown myself—I’ve looked out a nice deep hole on purpose. How are my rabbits ?

“ Your affectionate unhappy son,

“ SINGLETON SLIPSLOP.

“ P.S. I have not got a wafer, nor a half-penny to buy one with ; I must therefore use the Etonian succedaneum.

“ Mrs. Slipslop,

Slop Hall, Lincolnshire.”

The receipt of this affecting epistle threw Mrs. Slipslop into violent hysterics, which were succeeded by a fixed determination to prevent the “horrid suicide” of her son, by sending Mr. Corkscrew off to fetch him home at a minute’s notice. When he arrived at Eton, he found his young master, but could scarcely recognise him ; for, in addition to the ill-treatment indicated in his letter, he had been soundly thrashed for daring to write home to his mother—a fact which his most intimate friend had under a promise of secrecy disclosed to the whole school—and his countenance was a

*fac-simile* of a map of England with the counties distinguished by different colours, his tears doing for the rivers.

Grandpère was vexed and indignant at the failure of his favourite project, but withdrew his opposition to his removal from Eton, upon hearing his grandson describe, without exaggeration or embellishment, the benefits of the fagging system, and the judicious means adopted for rendering gentlemen's sons fully capable of judging of the qualities of their valets, by making them practically acquainted with the duties expected of gentlemen in that "situation."

Singleton's education, however, was not to be neglected; as the future master of Slipslop Hall, if not an M.P., would of course be a J.P.—an office which *requires* a great deal of learning and much study, as any one who frequents the courts of quarter-sessions will readily allow. A private tutor, or as they call such things in Oxford—a *private coach* (I presume from the fact of their having a *drag* upon them in their journey through life) was adopted as a *pis aller*, and the rector was requested by Mr. Cute to come and play a game of cribbage and recommend a proper person as a tutor.

The invitation was accepted of course, for the cellars of Slipslop Hall were well filled, and the contents of the respective bins well known to the worthy clerical. The cards and cribbage-board were produced, and a strangely-mingled discourse ensued, on the subject of tricks and trumps, tutors and testimonials, pegs and proficiency.

"My deal," cried the rector, lifting the pack with one hand and his glass of old East-India with the other, "and I'll bet a shilling on the rubber; but as I was saying, my young friend, Mr. Shanks of Corpus, is just the man to suit you; he is of high standing—fifteen two—where's my peg?—in his college, and has taken honours—there's the king—in the university; he will get Singleton on very fast—two for his heels—and they will agree admirably—two for that pair—and I am sure Mrs. Slipslop will not hesitate to reward his services, for she has—a flush of diamonds—sense enough to appreciate—my crib—his merits; so I'll write to him on that head—two for his nob—and I've no doubt he'll see that—it's my game—he can't do better than take—the odds on the rubber, five to two—our offer."

The result of this strange mixture of pasteboard and classical honours was, that the Reverend Nathan Shanks, of Corpus, condescended to exchange the dulness of his college rooms, and the precarious income arising from cramming undergraduates, for a suite of cheerful rooms at the Hall, and four hundred a year, with the prospect of succeeding the present incumbent in the rectory of Slippery-cum-Sloppery; a sacrifice on his part that justified the laudations he did not fail daily to bestow upon the son in the hearing of the lady-mother.



Mr. Shanks, in addition to a considerable portion of talent and great application, which had insured him one prize and a "double first," was possessed of more cunning—worldly wisdom is the more elegant term—than is generally discoverable in gentlemen who "waste the midnight oil" in searching for deeply-buried Greek roots, and assigning doubtful dates to still more doubtful historical events. He did not, therefore, irritate his pupil by working him too hard, nor his mother by bringing the "lily-hue of study" on her son by much confinement—the consequence was he became a favourite with both, and enjoyed more license and more comforts than generally fall to the lot of that enviable and useful class of men.

"Enviably?" cries out some one in amazement, "what can you mean?" Just let him try the "situation of private tutor in a nobleman or gentleman's family" for one month, and he will readily discover my meaning. I, Peter Priggins, have known many a high spirit crushed and many a noble heart broken by the experiment—but this is in a parenthesis.

When his seventeenth birthday arrived, Mr. Singleton was pronounced by his tutor as quite fitted by age and accomplishments to enter and reside at Oxford. He could, by the help of cribbs, translate three or four Latin and Greek books into very intelligible (to his tutor) English—do a copy of Hexameter verses by the aid of his gradus, and turn the psalms into elegant Elegiacs, though the phrase *omnipotente manu* occurred in every other line, varied now and then, to prevent the cutting off of the initial vowel by its fraternal expression *cœlipotente*. He had also encouraged his talent for English poetry, and received praise and a ten pound note from his grandfather for a poem on the death of General Wolfe, which commenced thus :

"Brave General Wolf! uncommon brave!! particular!!!  
Who for our sakes climb'd rocks quite perpendicular!"

How it ended I don't recollect—but in a style quite as deserving of the notes of admiration as of the note of the Bank of England with which his effort was rewarded.

Mr. Shanks established his pupil as a gentleman-commoner in comfortable rooms at St. Peter's, and himself in snug lodgings conveniently adjacent; and Mr. Singleton proceeded to show his taste by furnishing his apartments in such a style as a man of 500*l.* per annum ought to do—if he *has* any taste. His predecessor was a rackety man, and had left the furniture rather rickety;—there were tables with broken flaps and bandy legs; some chairs with backs and no seats; others with seats and no backs. Sofas supported by the walls, their hind-legs having been amputated for bonfires, with other articles to match. These were kindly taken to by

Mr. Biddy the upholsterer, at his own valuation of one pound ten, and, when repaired, supplied to some unfortunate freshman as a bargain, at ninety-four pound fifteen; the odd four pound fifteen being given to the duped man's scout for persuading him not to be so extravagant as to order *new* furniture when such *very* good secondhand articles could be had so *very* cheap.

The renovation of his rooms afforded great delight and satisfaction to Mr. Slipslop, and more to Biddy. The walls were covered with scarlet and gold flock paper, at seven shillings per yard, and gold beading at three shillings per foot. The floors carpeted with best Brussels at eleven shillings per yard, of a pattern just suited to college rooms, being an enormous pink peony on a delicate cream-coloured ground. The room was strewn with all sorts of reading-chairs, and reading-tables, though he never read at them, or in them, for fear of injuring them. Bronze and or-molu lamps were set upon those tables, but never used lest the oil should spoil the carpet.

The mantel-shelf was heavily laden with articles of *vertu*, and elegantly-cut scent-bottles. The flock paper was nearly obscured by a collection of paintings and prints; the choice of which being wisely left to the vender, he had displayed his good taste by selecting from his store the most expensive, without any regard to congruity—so that angels were mixed with opera-dancers, saints with prize-fighters, heathen goddesses with dead game, and luscious women in lascivious postures mingled with a group of “portraits of political characters.” Then there were Meerscham and Turkish pipes,—though he never smoked,—gold, silver, and all sorts of snuffboxes, filled with Fribourg's best sorts,—though he never took any snuff,—foils, sticks, and boxing-gloves,—though he never “risked his life in any dread encounter,”—a splendid double gun, in a splendid mahogany case—a pair of duelling pistols in ditto,—though he never shot bestials or humans,—and a vast variety of other articles, equally expensive and equally useless to him.

But his pride was his bedroom, with its dressing-table, on which were displayed all the perfumes, soaps, brushes, etc., etc., which Messrs. Price and Gosnell had succeeded in convincing him “no gentleman ought to be without.” Here Mr. Slipslop passed many a happy hour in viewing his own person in the various coats, waistcoats and trousers, with which his mahogany wardrobe was crammed.

I need scarcely say that he kept a tiger, and that the tiger was a perfect model of a brute. He wore a sky-blue coat with silver buttons, a pink-striped waistcoat, green plush sit-upons, and flesh-coloured silks in-doors; out of doors the lower garments were exchanged for immaculate white doeskins, and topboots—virgin Woodstocks on his hands, and a glazed hat upon his head with forty-two yards of silverthread upon it to loop up the brims to two

silver buttons. In this dress he attended his master daily, from two to four, in his drive along the Woodstock Road, in an exceedingly neat buggy—for cabs were not yet imported—and was expected to devote the hour before dinner-time to the decoration and perfumery of his person, as his master strongly objected to the natural perfume of humanity.

Mr. Singleton also kept two hunters, though he never hunted, and sporting dogs, though he never, as he expressed it, "let a piece off in his life, or saw a pointer dog perform a point." Nor were these the only animals he kept because it was a "swell thing" to do so,—more for the benefit of his friends than himself.

It was not at all likely that a gentleman commoner, with 500*l.* per annum, a private tiger and a private tutor, would be in want of friends and acquaintances, even if Mr. Shanks had not taken care to introduce him to the best men of the "reading set," which he did—but they did not suit Singleton nor Singleton them. They were constantly worrying themselves and him about the peculiar force of some particular Greek particle, or bothering him about the men of the year, who had taken a "first and a second," or a "second and a first," though he cared for none of those things; the consequence was a mutual coolness succeeded by a mutual cut.

The set he sought and succeeded with were the idlers—men of fashion—that is, Oxford fashion: beings who never read, because it was a bore; never hunted, because they wanted pluck for it; never rowed, because it spoiled their hands; and never fished, because it spoiled their complexions. Their mornings were passed in dressing, lounging to each other's rooms, and indulging in talk—it could not be called conversation—about music, of which they did not know a note.—Green-rooms, the interiors of which they had never seen—and women whom they only knew by name, though they let fall sundry hints of the expensiveness of their favours. They strolled down the High Street once or twice, to show their coats, took a quiet drive or ride, and then dressed for dinner, vying with each other in stocks, waistcoats, and silk stockings; dined quietly, and talked of the merits of their respective tailors and bootmakers, sipped a few glasses of light wine with their dinner, a little claret afterwards, and after an early cup of coffee, with its accompanying *chasse*, lounged again, and talked again of the virtues of their tailors and their women, and fondly fancied they had passed a "gentlemanly, quiet day."

Such was the emasculated set of whom Mr. Slipslop made one; but his most intimate friend, though he hated him cordially, was the Honourable Mr. Spunge, son of the Lord Viscount Spendall, Baron Drypurse, of Starveline, in the county of Chester. He was entered as a gentleman-commoner, with a very limited supply of pewter—150*l.* per annum, and the prospect of the family living of Starveline

as soon as he could get ordained, or, as he called it *japan'd*. Upon his 150*l*. he not only contrived to live, but to live well, without running into debt; he was very gentlemanly, very clever, and very insinuating in his manners and address. He easily ascertained from Mr. Slipslop's tiger the amount of his master's income, and the nature of his habits and disposition, and when he found that he was disgusted with the reading men, to whom he had been introduced by his tutor, he called upon him, and made him happy, by establishing him among the fashionables who arrogated to themselves the title of *nulli secundi*.

These *nulli secundi* were the willing victims of Mr. Spunge. He not only rode their horses for them, but bought, sold, and exchanged them; drew plans, and made models of new dennets and stanhopes; selected milliners' apprentices, and looked out lodgings for them; recommended Schneiders and bootmakers, and directed them in the choice of their tigers' liveries. From all these services he added largely to his income, and the only recompense he looked for or received beyond their grateful thanks was that he breakfasted with one, dined with another, wined with a third, and borrowed a few sovereigns now and then from all. But to Mr. Slipslop he adhered most perseveringly, and gained so great an ascendancy over him, by making himself master of all his secrets, that he not only lived upon him in college, but kindly condescended to pass his vacations with him at the Hall—Slipslop *mère* being too highly gratified at her son's intimacy with an honourable to offer the least opposition to a plan so vastly convenient, and Mr. Shanks too idle and careless to think anything about the matter.

Mr. Spunge made himself at home. He shot in the well-filled preserves, fished in the well-stored lakes, hunted with the Lincolnshire fox-hounds, and invited the members thereof to breakfast or dine at the Hall, as the "meet," or the end of the run suggested; he invited the ladies to archery meetings, and gipsying parties—ordered the *déjeuners*—emptied and replenished the bins—in short, did all that the heir ought to have done himself.

Did Singleton like all this?—Decidedly not; but he was so completely in Mr. Spunge's power that he dared not object. He tried once, and only once, to rid himself of his tormentor by resolutely insisting that six dozen of champagne was too much to be iced at once for a party of sixteen; and was proceeding to ring the bell to tell Corkscrew, the butler, to ice only half the quantity, when Mr. Spunge quietly informed him that any interference with his plans would be attended with the disclosure to his mother of all Mr. Singleton's correspondence with Miss Pauline Pincushion, the straw-bonnet maker in St. Clement's. It is needless to say the six dozen were iced.

Such was the power acquired by Mr. Spunge over his friend that

when the period arrived for the examinations, and Mr. Singleton, by the aid of his private coach, and a little interest with the examiners, got his *testamur*, or certificate of having given satisfaction in *litteris humanioribus*, he told him coolly and plainly that he must give a great-go party, and not confine it to the *nulli secundi*—undertaking to relieve him of the trouble of writing the invites by doing it for him.

"Singleton," said he emphatically, "you *must* give a party—it is usual—I *must* be there—you cannot do without me. We *must* have the fast men—your set is too slow. I will invite them; give me some plain cards."

"But," interferred Singleton, "*what* men will you invite? I think I ought to know that; I'm not going to sit down to feed with every body. I don't know a man out of our own set."

"Pray, my dear Singleton, sit down, and don't be fussy—I know every body. The reading men are greater spoonies than yourself, and won't come; the saints will hypocricize for a while, but will all come eventually, and get *very* drunk; the reprobates will not hesitate a moment."

"So then," cried Slipslop, "I shall be expected to *exceed* myself—get tipsy overnight, and be very sick and ill in the morning. I would rather—"

"My dear fellow," said Spunge, "pray do not go on so, you have made me spell Smythe's name with an i, an offence he never forgives."

The cards were written, and thirty men invited in this form:—"Wine with me, Thursday, at 6.—Singleton Slipslop." The inviter, finding all opposition useless, called to me with his usual "*Petarrh*." To which in a rage, at his nasty effeminate way of pronouncing my name, I replied "*Sarrh?*"

"I am going to have a few friends on Thursday; lay for thirty. Port and sherry—plain dessert—no ices—no champagne—no claret—coffee at eight, and no supper."

"Bishop or cardinal—egg-flip or punch?"

"Neither, *Petarrh*; we shall retire early."

"Leave all that to me, Peter," said Mr. Spunge; "Mr. Slipslop is unused to such parties."

"But I insist—"

"On having a good party, and doing the correct thing. Now take a quiet turn in your buggy, and Peter and I will settle all in a few seconds," observed Mr. Spunge, as he deliberately turned the donor of the feast out of his own rooms, and turning round to me with perfect *nonchalance*, said "Peter, I mean to have a lark. Take these cards, and see they are delivered. Go to Mr. Pastyface, the confectioner, and order a good dessert for thirty, with lots of ices, to be sent in regularly every half-hour, all the evening; then to

Mr. Crusty, the wine-merchant—the Slipslop wine is too good to waste on every body, and order one dozen sherry, four dozen port, strong and hot, and two six-dozen cases of claret, well brandied—I mean every man to be drunk. Take care that the cook has an exceedingly nice supper ready at nine.—Broiled chickens, bones of all sorts, lobster salads, devilled kidneys—every thing in short that he can get. You, yourself, Peter, will make with your usual skill ten jugs of bishop, ten of cardinal, ten of egg-flip or punch—let there be plenty of cigars, and plenty of malt at supper—I mean the men to be drunk. Order no wheelbarrows from the Star, as I limit the invites to in-college men.”

I willingly obeyed, as I liked a little mischief, and foresaw a few perquisites.

The memorable Thursday arrived, and with it all the guests ; some of whom had never been introduced or spoken to their entertainer in their lives. Mr. Slipslop was of course the president, and Mr. Spunge, by self-election, his vice, who took care that the *nulli secundi* should be mixed up heterogeneously with the company, and not, as they intended, packed up by themselves.

Knock after knock, and “come in” after “come in,” soon filled the tables ; and Mr. Singleton Slipslop arose, and with dignity proposed, “Church and King,” which went off very quietly. He seemed disposed to linger before he gave another toast, when an impudent dog, who had never spoken to him in his life, called out, “I say, old fellow, this is cursed slow—let’s have the ‘Rest of the Royal Family’—get rid of the nobility, and begin the evening.”

Mr. Slipslop looked to his vice for sympathy in his disgust, but Mr. Spunge “begged to second the motion ;” and “Peter,” said he, “place a bottle of claret before every gentleman—passing the wine heats it. Those who prefer porting it, may port it ; and, gentlemen, I beg to propose that every man knocks the handle off his glass—then bumpers and no taps.”

“Hurrah ! Bravo !” and sundry other noises indicated assent, and “*dicto citius*,” every glass was denuded of its stand-upon by a smart rap from the handle of a knife.

Mr. Slipslop was the last to follow the example set him by his friend ; but, seeing all opposition useless, screwed up his courage, and smashed his crystal.

“Bumpers, gentlemen, if you please,” called out Mr. Spunge. “Now that we’ve shown our loyalty, I’ll give you a toast, ‘The Ladies,’ with nine times nine.”

Then commenced the usual indications of delight. Cries of all sorts—who-whoops !—hurrahs ! and screams—the rattling of glasses, plates, knives, forks, and spoons—the thumping of fists on the table, till every dish, plate, and jug, seemed in convulsions, and “one cheer more,” made the windows and doors shake in their sockets.

"And next, gentlemen, with permission from the chairman, I give you—(there's wine left in your glass, Smythe—off with it), another bumper toast—fill up (there's daylight in your glass, Smythe—it won't do—I'll have no shirking)—Gentlemen, I beg to propose the health of a man who has done honour to himself and the college, by inviting us all here to-day, to celebrate the passing of his great-go. (Hear! hear! hear!) Gentlemen, I've known him intimately all his college life; and though some of you may fancy him rather *slow*, I know enough of him to assure you, you cannot drink his wine *fast* enough. I'll not detain you, gentlemen, from the excellent fare provided for you; but give you, Mr. Singleton Slipslop's good health, with the due honours."

This toast, of course, called forth a repetition of all the former noises: but with a prolongation of them intended to recompense the liberality of the entertainment.

Mr. Slipslop's *amour propre* was gratified—his eyes sparkled as he rose and filled a bumper, and, bowing gracefully to the company, said, "I've no hesitation in saying, gentlemen, that I—I—I—I've no hesitation, gentlemen, in saying—"

"What a lie!" cried Smythe, half *sotto voce*.

"That I—I—I—am very glad to see you." And down he sat, having achieved more than he had ever done before in his life.

"Now," said Mr. Spunge, "we'll have a song—who'll begin?"

"Smythe, Smythe, Smythe!" was the general cry.

"Really," replied Smythe, "I should be very happy, but I've got a bad cold."

"From smoking a damp cigar, I suppose?" cried little Mr. Brown. "*Omnibus hoc vitium est cantoribus.*"

"A fine! a fine!"

"Well," said Mr. Brown, "I only wish all my fines could be paid the same way—*nunc gloria claret.*"

"Another fine! another fine!"

"That's rather too bad—but here goes." And Mr. Brown, having absorbed two extra bumpers, sat down; and Mr. Smythe pretending to cough up something which was *not* in his throat, began with a very comic expression of face, "On the Banks of Allan Water," but was interrupted with loud cries of "That's sentimental,—d—n sentimental—let's have a comic song—All round my hat—If I had a donkey—May-day in the morning, etc., etc., etc."

Poor Smythe in vain tried another sentimental—it would not do. "Take a little *rosin*," cried Brown, pouring a bumper of wine into his glass. "*Ἰδὼν μὲν ἄριστον*, Pindar says, but he's a liar."

Brown was fined again, and Mr. Smythe sung in excellent style something about a feminine donkey that had a masculine child, that was brought up under Mr. Martin's act for getting up a ladder, which seemed to give great satisfaction.

"Mr. Smythe and his song—hurrah! hurrah!" and the noise grew louder and more furious.

Mr. Smythe returned thanks, and called on Mr. Singleton Slipslop for a song and a glass of vanille ice.

With the latter request the host immediately complied, but positively declined the former.

"Then," said his vice, "you must tell a story, make a speech, or drink a tumbler of wine."

Mr. Slipslop could only perform the last feat, and that with a very bad grace, as the wine began to get very nauseous, and the olives—which fashion had induced him to try to swallow—did not operate as a composer to his stomach; he bolted the dose, however, with such a wry face as to produce more fun among his friends than any song or story could have done.

He was informed that, like the saints, he "had a call," and he called on Mr. Spunge, by way of paying him off, as he thought: but Mr. Spunge immediately answered the call, by singing an exceedingly good song—about the adventures of three flies—exceedingly well.

Then Mr. Spunge's health was drunk, and so great was the zeal displayed, that, to Singleton's horror, every man, in addition to shouting and screeching, dug his knife as deep as he could, by repeated chops, into the well-polished mahogany table.

Other songs succeeded, though many of the singers wanted voice and ear, and some knew tunes but no words, and others the words but no tunes. Then began some pleasant practical jokes, such as pelting each other with strawberries, nuts, and olives; putting large dabs of ice down one man's back, and pouring a glass of claret into another man's white sit-upons' pocket, with other little innocent divertimentos, such as withdrawing his chair when a gentleman got up to make a speech, and causing him to "come down with a run." Upsetting the sofa and the four occupants, which caused the back to part company from the legs and seat; then of course the squabs and pillows were hurled about in all directions, smashing bottles, glasses, and plates, the chandeliers, and French lamps.

Poor Singleton, whose eyes were almost too glazy to discern what was going on, saw that his delicate carpet was ruined for ever, as rivers of wine were flowing over it, meandering between islands of crushed strawberries, squashed oranges, and rapidly-melting lumps of iced creams; he rose with great difficulty, and, holding on by both arms of his chair, begged and prayed the gentlemen to "behave as sich," but was immediately knocked down by a well-aimed tipsy-cake—the gravy and almonds with which it was besmeared and studded leaving his countenance the exact model of a "chicken in white sauce and mushrooms."



Just as he had scooped the liquid out of his eyes with difficulty, to ascertain by whose hands the missile had been hurled, and was about to vent his indignation at the indignity in very strong language, Mr. Sponge stopped the flow of eloquence by throwing himself back in his chair, and applying both feet with a sudden jerk to the end of the table. The consequence was, that Mr. Slip-slop fell backwards under the grate, overwhelmed with the whole dessert, ices, and wines; then, of course, there was a general row—tables, chairs, books, and men were heaped in pyramids upon the fallen host—coat-tails were torn off—caps and gowns broken and torn to ribbons—one gentleman amused himself by thrusting a foil through the pictures, another by playing very much out of tune on a keyed bugle—a third accompanying him on the poker and tongs. At last, loud cries of “Shame! Shame! Too bad! Pull him out!” induced Mr. Sponge to restore the table to its proper place, and to dig Mr. Slipslop out of his tumulus. He was resurrectionized more dead than alive! Some were alarmed, but Mr. Sponge untied his neckcloth, unbuttoned his shirt-collar, and with the help of two or three of the soberest carried him to his bedroom, where they peeled him and put him into bed—but not by himself—for there lay his tiger, who had been missing for some time, in a worse state than his master, in consequence of having emptied the bottoms of some five or six dozen of claret-bottles.

In went poor Singleton with his servant, Mr. Sponge ensuring the comforts of both, by diligently cutting off the bristles of all the hair and clothes'-brushes he could find with a razor, and strewing them in the bed, and then emptying the contents of two ewers of water over their heads and faces. But the unkindest cut of all was shaving off one of Mr. Singleton's whiskers and the corresponding eyebrow, of whose well-cultivated beauties he was deeply enamoured; the deficiency being charitably made good by the aid of burnt cork and tallow-grease. As his partiality for perfumes was well known, the counterpane was thoroughly soaked with eau-de-Cologne, esprit-de-lavande, bouquet-du-roi, and other delicate distillations.

On his return to the party, Mr. Sponge found several men, especially the *nulli*, in a very bad way; so a procession was formed, and every drunken man was carried by four staggering half-drunken men first round the quadrangle—Brown playing “The Dead March in Saul,” on the keyed bugle, accompanied, *obligato*, by Smythe on a tin trumpet—and then to their respective beds, where, of course, burnt cork and red paint were properly applied, and the position of the bedsteads changed, to ensure their not knowing their own faces or their whereabouts when they awoke in the morning.

The procession was then re-formed, and returned to the tune of

"Oh, dear! what can the matter be?" and, in passing under the window of the vice-principal's rooms, was stopped to give three groans in honour of that individual, who was not a very popular character in college.

He was a very passionate, but a very prudent person. His rage would have led him to rush from his rooms and inflict summary justice on the offenders; but his prudence induced him to send for the porter, and order him to take down their names, and inquire in whose rooms the row originated.

"Mr. Slipslop, sir, giving his great-go party," replied the college Cerberus.

"Then go to his rooms, and desire him to call on me to-morrow morning, and tell all the gentlemen to go to their rooms directly, and to call on me to-morrow morning also."

Cerberus proceeded to execute his commission; but Mr. Spunge, who suspected his errand, was hostile, sported oak, and, mounting the window-sill, cut into him, through the open staircase-window, with a tandem-whip, until he danced and bellowed with the pain, and was finally forced to beat a retreat.

"Bravo! hurrah!" cried all. "What shall we do till supper-time?"

"Let us go to the Star," said Mr. Spunge, "and hear the harper."

This was agreed upon; but just as they were starting, poor Mr. Brown, from his exertions in playing the bugle, and from his having been fined for talking in unknown tongues—was getting very tipsy and obstreperous. He hiccupped a positive resolution not to go to the Star, as the barmaid had boxed his ears the night before, and hinted that he had an assassination—as he would insist on calling an assignation—with some very pretty girl somewhere or other. Mr. Spunge suggested to Mr. Smythe, whose performances on the tin horn had reduced him to much the same state as his brother musician, that the young lady in question was his, Mr. Smythe's, *chère amie*, and told him he was surprised he put up with such treatment so coolly. Upon this, Mr. Smythe got very hot, and a regular quarrel ensued, which, by the judicious instigation of the bystanders, ended in a regular fight, attended by no very serious results, beyond making the principals perfectly insensible.

Mr. Spunge, therefore, took Mr. Slipslop's best beaver, and, after dipping the crown in some lamp-oil, rubbed it against the chimney-back, and then against Messrs. Smythe and Brown's faces, preparing them for the character of Othello; he next dipped Mr. Slipslop's silver-handled shaving-brush into an inkstand, and made a luxurious lather in the elegant silver soap-dish, with which he prepared both their heads for the process of shaving; he contented himself, however, with sawing, or chopping off the hair upon the back part of their heads only, so that when they looked in the glass they should not be able to detect the trick that had been played

them. The plot succeeded, for they walked into chapel next morning, to the great amusement of the men, and horror of the dean, with their faces only half denuded of the soot and oil, and the rear of their heads resembling a worn-out hair-trunk. They were put into bed for the night, with Mr. Slipslop and his tiger, with their heads where their feet ought to have been, to give them more roomy accommodation.

Mr. Spunge and the rest of the party, now reduced to fourteen or fifteen, then sallied out of college, and fortunately met Mr. Pasty-face, the confectioner's man, bearing a large tray of coffee and toast to a party of reading men. The weight was so great as to require the aid of both his hands to carry it; instead, therefore, of taking off his hat as usual, he was forced to show his respect by only bowing as they passed. At this Mr. Spunge pretended to take offence, and after abusing the poor man, took his hat off *for* him, and kicked it into the gutter. Of course, in endeavouring to regain it, it was necessary the tray should be deposited on the ground, and as soon as that was done, and before he could recover from his stooping posture, a judicious application of Mr. Spunge's foot sent him head first among the coffee-pots and toast-dishes, the contents of the former scalding his face and hands, and the latter rending his dirty jacket more offensively greasy than it was before.

The man himself did not complain, for he was used to such things, and knew that he should be well paid for his scaldings on the morrow; but the passers-by expressed their indignation by cries of "Shame!" "Don't stand it!" "Knock them down!" And one gentleman, more zealous than the rest, ventured to assist the tart-man to rise, but quickly found himself seated by his side in the middle of the tray and boiling coffee.

This of course led to a row, and the row to a fight, which would probably have terminated in a town and gown battle, as numbers were collecting at the well-known war-cry, had not the proctor, with two *bull-dogs*—as his assistants are called—and the marshal, made their appearance at the corner of the street. The effect upon the inimical parties was much the same as the entrance of a dog into a field upon a flock of sheep: they first stood still to gaze upon the common enemy, and then turned and ran away as fast as they could.

The proctor only caught one unhappy townsman, who was too busily engaged in looking about for his two front teeth to see his approach, but sent the bull-dogs and the marshal in pursuit. The latter marked out Mr. Spunge from his quarry, and away they went down High-street, Derby pace, upsetting several inoffensive pedestrians in their way. Both were swift of foot, but the marshal ran cunning, and would have caught his man, had not he slipped up in trying to turn the corner by the physic-gardens, which gave Mr.

Spunge so much the advantage that he was in Christ Church meadow, and into Davis's punt and across into St. Aldate's, before the official had finished manipulating the part of his person most injured by the fall.

The bull-dogs were completely thrown out, and my party returned in safety to college and supper at nine—by availing themselves of the sinuosities of sundry lanes and alleys, managing to collect, in their passage, nine knockers, four bell-pulls, and an old lady's bonnet, something the worse for wear.

Mr. Spunge took the president's chair, and great were the dilapidations caused to the viands, for wine always makes men hungry. Still, as the supper was laid for thirty, and only fourteen sat down to it, I managed to collect sufficient to remunerate me for my trouble.

After supper, I put the "nightcaps" on the table; and after some gallons had been consumed, and the same songs sung over again, I put all the men to bed except Mr. Spunge, who had absorbing qualities of so high a character as never to be what is termed "the worse for liquor."

The only unpleasant incident that occurred during the consumption of my compounds, arose from an Irish gentleman breaking a bowl of punch upon a man's head, and threatening to call him out for objecting to lime-juice. Mr. Spunge put an end to his remarks, however, by throwing a glass of very hot egg-flip into his capacious mouth, and turning him out of the room, while the agony caused by the adhesive application rendered him incapable of resistance.

On the following morning, on my coming into college, I found Mr. Slipslop nearly naked, thrashing his tiger with a bootjack—not for getting drunk, but for daring to sleep with him, and laughing at his absent whisker and eye-brow.

"*Petarrh*," said he, "see this beast outside of college and a coach—pay his wages and his fare, and nonsuit him of his livery; then take my compliments to the vice-principal, and say I am going down into the country."

"I beg pardon, *sarrh*," cried I, "but Mr. Spunge said you wasn't to move out without his leave."

"Mr. Spunge be——"

"And the vice-principal, *sarrh*, has sent his compliments to say, you must call on him as soon as you can."

"But how can I go this figure?"

He really did look very unpresentable; but by dint of shaving off the other whisker—in attempting which he cut his face three times, being very nervous, and putting a small green verandah over his damaged eyebrow, he mustered courage to venture out. In passing through his room, the scene of the last night's debauch—either the sight of his damaged "furniture and other effects," or

the odour of "spirituous liquors and compounds," which had not yet ceased to exist, caused him to hurry into the open air with greater agility than I had ever seen him display before.

Mr. Spunge met him at the foot of the staircase ; and, after assuring him of his regret at not being able to prevent Messrs. Smythe and Brown acting as decapillaries upon his whisker and eyebrow, insisted on going to the vice-principal's with him, and taking the blame of all that had occurred upon himself. This he did in the most gentlemanly and courageous manner, knowing that that functionary would not venture to punish the only *honourable* he had in college.

Mr. Slipslop got off with a severe reprimand and a bilious fever ; and Mr. Spunge was liberated after a short lecture, ending with "My compliments to Lord Spendall, your honourable father, when you write home."

So ended Mr. Singleton Slipslop's great-go party.

## CHAPTER V.

I HATE shaving, or being shaved ; it's a disagreeable operation, admitting only of the alternative of cutting yourself, or being cut by some one else ; and no man likes to be *cut*, either actually or metaphorically. Then the temporary obscuration of three-fourths of one's face by a mass of soapsuds is unpleasant ; for no one, even a schoolboy, likes to be *lathered*. The mowing process is certainly the most objectionable, particularly when one's countenance, like Esau's, the founder of the sect called *hairy'uns*, bears such a harvest as to require being laid in swarthes, like a grass-field with a heavy crop upon it. It is not pleasant either to have one's nose made a handle of by the operator, and to twist one's facial muscles into positions both ludicrous and painful. But however disagreeable the operation is, it is one which both fashion and cleanliness require ; and if a man cannot perform upon himself, like a self-acting pianoforte, he must employ a substitute, however discordant it may be to his feelings.

Every college has, as part and parcel of its establishment, an officer called a tonsor, who, like the chest of drawers in the Deserted Village, has "a double debt to pay," being not only required at any moment to respond to the call of "one hair cut and curled," (as Mr. Keeley says in the farce called the "Burlington Arcade") or "one gentleman to be shaved," but also to procure a supply of servitors and bible-clerks, *sub rosa*, who are able and willing, in order to increase their very limited allowances, to do impositions and college exercises for those who are unable or unwilling

to do them for themselves. This is now the most profitable part of their profession, as they get a prettier per-centage from the inside of their *employé's* heads, than they do from the outside of those of their employers—at least, since the expulsion of pigtails, powder, and pomatum.

Mr. Chops, the tonsor of St. Peter's, kindly operates half-price on the college servants, and I gladly avail myself of his services, as I am too nervous to look myself in the face with an edged tool in my hand, ever since, in my first attempt to remove a few sprouting signs of manhood, I mowed off not only the crop itself, but three inches and a half of the epidermis on which it grew along with it. Mr. Chops makes me nervous sometimes, as he has acquired by constant practise, and at a considerable expense, that peculiar tremulousness of the hand which invariably follows "potations pottle-deep;" and when he has exceeded beyond his wont, "cut follows cut," as the broadsword-players say, in rapid succession, and all expostulations are speedily ended by a *thrust* of the soap-brush so near the region of eloquence, as to render it unsafe to "show one's teeth," so he can "cut and come again" with impunity. One thing, however, I must in justice state—he supplies styptics and sticking-plaster gratis.

I have but little doubt in my own mind that Xenophon and the other Greeks of old, called their foreign foes *οἱ βαρβαροί* from their proficiency in cutting, gashing, and drawing blood, and that thence the modern designation barber was derived; though it must be allowed that the ancients had the advantage of us moderns, as they could and did return the compliment, which the rigidity of our laws will not permit us to do. We must "grin and bear it," as Mr. Polito used to assure the laughing hyena when he disturbed his slumbers by stirring him up with the long pole.

A few mornings since, when Mr. Chops called to operate upon me, I felt that I was in danger of being mangled more unmercifully than usual, as he always indicates an addition to his habitual shakiness, by humming the tune of "Come where the aspens *quiver*," to prepare his victim for his fate; and this particular morning I shuddered as I heard him harmonizing louder than usual, and ending with a prolonged shake upon the *penultima* of the last word as he opened my parlour-door.

"M—m—mor—morning, Peter," said he, for he stammers most awfully.

I politely returned his salutation, and with timorous fortitude submitted my bare throat to his weapon. The application of the brush was indicative of what was to follow; for the first thrust which he made at my chin lighted upon my nose, and then he flourished and ran as rapidly over the lineaments of my face as a

harper, ignorant of his art, does over the strings of his instrument, seldom hitting the right chord, as Horace better expresses it :—

“ Qui chorda semper oberrat eadem.”

He then proceeded to strop his razor, and, to my surprise, succeeded in doing so without cutting his thumb off. He next seized me by the nose, and putting the high pressure upon his thumb and finger, in order to “hold on by,” as the sailors say, applied the cold iron to my cheek with much the same sort of touch that a miniature-painter uses in putting in his background. Having cleared about three inches, and drawn blood in three places, he relinquished his hold to apply his styptic, and coolly observed :—

“ You’ve c—c—colched it n—ni—nicely.”

I could not speak, so I merely nodded to intimate that I felt the truth of his remark ; but when he added, “ In the p—p—apers,” I threw a look interrogatory into my eyes which elicited this explanation.

“ Mrs. Ch—Ch—Ch—ops and my gals t—take in the p—p—enny p—p—eriodical of l—l—itterater and B—B—ell’s Letters, and there’s a cr—cr—itic (meaning *critique*, I presume) on your ‘L—l—ife and T—t—imes’ in this n—n—umber ; they l—lay it on p—pretty thick (here he renewed the application of the soap-brush) I can t—t—ell you, they’ve c—c—ut you up m—most inhumanely (a gash an inch long just under my nose;) they’re sh—sh—arp pr—pr—actioners, and don’t se—seem to care for the f—f—eelings of no—body (two drops of styptic that burnt like caustic and brought the tears into my eyes). I se—see you f—f—eels it. You shall se—see it when they’ve d—d—one with it in the b—b—uttery ; they’ve w—wiped you down handsome ;” and he concluded his performances and remarks by removing the superfluous soapsuds with his napkin.

I put on my coat and a philosophical sneer, and positively declined reading “ Mrs. Ch—Ch—op’s ch—ch—ap publication.”

“ Well, if you w—w—on’t good b—b—y,” said Mr. Chops, resuming his rounds and his roundelay, “ Come where the aspens quiver.” I was congratulating myself on having escaped without having my nose chopped off, and my best feelings lacerated by the concentrated venom of some “ *judex fatalis incestusque*,” when I was interrupted by a loud single rap, which would have thrown any of my former masters into sudorifics, and which caused Mrs. Priggins to look out of temper and the window, and say :—

“ Deary me, how very tiresome ! Broome and Dusterly coming to call, and my hair still in *puppy lots*,” which, she says, is French for curl-papers.

No woman is exempt from what I call personal hypocrisy, and

Mrs. P., of course, has her share. She tells every body "she wears her own hair," and so she does; but it has been cut off her head for these ten years, and made up, by Chop's ingenuity, into false-fronts; each of which looks to me, as it lies for the night in its oblong pasteboard-box, like two poodle-dog's ears nailed to a long leather-strap; to render the deception practised on the public more complete, the curls are put into *papillotes* as long as Mrs. P. "is in *dish-a-bill*," which is until she "cleans herself" for dinner.

She, of course, vanished up stairs, as "she was not fit to be seen that figger," and I opened the door to admit my friends Broome and Dusterly, who always run in couples like the Pylades and Orestes of ancient, and the Pontos and Snowballs of modern days. They seem to be almost as inseparable as those pretty little Indian birds, which my youngest daughter calls *affidavits*, though their proper name is, I believe, *Averdevats*.

I concluded that they had merely called to take their customary "morning," and was going to send Peter, jun., to the buttery to procure the requisites, but was interrupted by Dusterly, who called out emphatically as usually:—

"Stop ha hinstant! now, Mr. Broome, hout with the hinformation."

Broome dived into the depths of his coat-pocket, and with some difficulty fished up a double diurnal newspaper, and covering the dining-table with it, turned it inside and outside, and at last found and pointed out to me an article headed "*Reviews of the Periodicals*," directing my attention more particularly to the remarks on the *N. M. M.* Upon skimming it over as rapidly as possible, I found "Paper by the Editor—good as usual. By Mrs. Trollope—satirical as ever, with two engravings. Several others, all intended to please, which will be much approved of by some people, but perhaps not by others. Peter Priggins again—more university profligacy—we've no doubt it's all false—that is, fictitious, imaginary, though we think it a true picture of Oxford life—rather over-coloured, or over-drawn—but by the hand of an artist. We think it bad taste to bring such scenes before the public, though we confess we approve of their exposition, especially as we have had scenes of naval and military life, and of high life and low life *usque ad nauseam*. Though we think the publication of life at college and public school may do a great deal of harm, we are still of opinion that it will certainly produce a great deal of good. The author, we understand, has been offered 3,000*l.* and a D. C. L. degree, by the delegates of the University Press, if he will allow his MS. to be printed at the Clarendon, and published amongst the other standard works of that admirable and useful institution."

"Well," said Broome, dodging me round the dining-table, until he got me into a favourable position for an examination, by placing



his back against the window, and causing the light to fall upon my face, "well, is that true?—are we to congratulate you on being an honorary doctor?"

"Hand hif you his to ave hall that here hamount, you can haf-ford to beave andsome to han hold friend—his hit true?"

"Quite as true," I replied, "as the accounts you may have seen lately in the papers of the enormous sums of money given by their respective publishers to the authors of the most popular works of the day."

"But," continued Broome, smiling at the dubious looks of Dusterly, who could not quite comprehend whether I was to be a D. C. L. or not, "what answer do you make to the charge of overcharging your descriptions—overcolouring or overdrawing, as the critic calls it?"

"Haye, hexhaggerhaling as hi call hit! What do you say to that?"

"Simply this : You both of you know as well as I do, that many such scenes as I have described have really been witnessed in Oxford—(and in Cambridge too, I've no doubt—*similes similibus gaudent*) unsanctioned, of course, by the authorities. To please the taste of the public, which, in these days, requires highly-seasoned dishes, it is absolutely necessary to embellish, or, in the words of the critic before us, to overdraw and overcolour. This remark will apply not only to writings intended to *amuse*, but to those meant to *instruct*; indeed, to very many things besides. Do you think," said I, pointing to a very flattering likeness of Mrs. P. in a very handsome gilt frame, carefully covered over with fly-defying yellow gauze, "do you think that my old woman would have allowed that misrepresentation of herself to hang there if the artist had not improved upon nature? *ut pictura poesis*—the best book that ever was written would not *sell* in these days without a great name, a grand and startling title-page, or plenty of puffing and patronage, and scarcely, with all these advantages, without twenty-four 'etchings by Mr. Straightlegs.' This is peculiarly the age of embellishment,

' Nova nomina rerum  
Protulit ætas nostra.'

What mamma would send her son to *Mister Birch's school*? but *Doctor B.'s* "classical and commercial academy" for the instillation of merchants' accounts and metaphysics is a very different thing. Mrs. P. calls having a few friends to tea and talk, 'giving a swurry and conversationy,' and designates her little back bed-room as her 'boodoye;' a common headache is termed 'a nervous disarrangement of the internal contents of the occiput,' and even a pair of boots are called a 'membraneous envelopment of the lower extremities.'

"True," said Broome, "for Mrs. B. calls my old arm-chair a 'footel' and the footstool an 'ottymum.'"

"And my missus," observed Dusterly, "calls hour hass hon which hour Enry rides, 'his helegant hanimal for oss hexercise.'"

"As to the critic's speculation," I continued, "about the good or harm likely to result from my stories of college life, I can only say that they are not written with a view of effecting any change whatever in the sentiments of the public towards the universities, but merely to amuse the readers of the *N. M. M.*; and if they prove offensive to any one of its numerous perusers, he has the remedy in his own power—let him leave my leaves uncut, and my contributions unread."

Mrs. P. here made her appearance "commyo," and invited my friends to a "little *déjinnay*," in the shape of bread, cheese, and ale, of which Dusterly eat and drank enormously, declaring that a "little snap was more ealthy than a great cloggy meal."

When they had taken their "little snap," and their departure, I strolled into my garden, and found my son and successor, Peter, junr., busily employed in washing out the barrels of a double gun, under the pump, preparatory to "the first," not for himself, but for one of his masters, who always resides during "the long," for the purpose of enjoying a little fishing and shooting, without being pestered and annoyed by the interruptions of the undergraduates.

The sight of the gun brought to my mind an old story of "a day's shooting," which I shall tell by and by.

The shooting about Oxford would be very good if the men could only get leave to go into the preserves; but as that is a very difficult thing to obtain, unless they happen to have a good introduction to the landlords or farmers in the neighbourhood, they are driven to the open and unpreserved parts of the country, which are not very thickly populated with partridges or pheasants, except for the first week or two of the season. I myself have seen ten men—snobs—in top-boots, with tinder-boxes (*i. e.* flint guns) in their hands, marching down Wolvercot field, massacring every thing, feathered or flicked, that got up before them, without *leave* or *licence*, and that in the good old times when gentlemen did *not* pay their fishmongers in kind, but distributed their game to their friends. When the men come up in October, there are but a few larks left for them to practice upon, with now and then a solitary rabbit in a hedgerow, who has been shot at too often to venture out except at midnight. This scarcity of game in the unpreserved districts compels them, much against their will, to intrude upon the neighbouring preserves, and to resort to all manner of tricks to elude the vigilance of the keepers and their employers.

Sometimes this is effected by driving up to the cover-side, hav-

ing a pull right and left at the pheasants, and driving off before the keeper can get to the spot. Sometimes by sneaking into cover without a dog, going directly to the barley-rick, where the birds are fed, and after bagging a brace, lying quietly in a ditch, or up in a thick tree, until the search is over. At other times it is necessary to bribe the keeper, and if he is too conscientious to accept the offer, to give him a false name, or the governor's certificate, and if that won't do, to give him, which he must take, a sound threshing, and then run for their lives. One or other of these plans generally answers.

Some of the uninitiated may ask if shooting is allowed by the authorities of the university. The statute "*De armis non gestandis*," expressly forbids "*intra universitatis ambitum*," "the carrying of arms, either offensive or defensive, such as swords, daggers, little dittoes, commonly called stilettoes, skeans, bows and arrows, *bombardas* (what they are even Ainsworth did not know, as he has left the word out of his dictionary) either by day or night, except on a journey to or from Oxford, under the penalty of being fined two shillings to the university." The same statute, however, allows the members to carry bows and arrows, "*honestæ recreationis causâ*," which is doubtless the origin of the archery meetings which are now held in the gardens of those colleges which are fortunate enough to have these delightful appendages.

As these statutes were written before the days of Friar Bacon, who invented gunpowder, and lived at or upon Grandpont (the bridge at the bottom of St. Aldgates) and have not been materially altered since Friar Bacon's time, no mention is made of cannons, (excepting those of Christ Church) guns, pistols, or pistolets—the use of them is therefore allowed, or at least winked at, which is the same thing, "*honestæ recreationis causâ*," in lieu of the bow and arrow, the use of which is confined to a few very fine men, who like to attitudinize and shew off their figures before the ladies.

Archery meetings, I allow, are very pleasant things for bringing people together to eat and drink in a tent, lounge about prettily laid-out grounds, and finish the evening with a dance; but it puts me in an awful rage to see a great, strapping, full-grown fellow with a diminutive bow in his hand, fancying himself Robin Hood, because he happens to have on a Spanish hat and feathers, a suit of Lincoln green, with a "quiver full of arrows" at his back, a delicate white kid glove on one hand, and a thing like three tailor's thimbles on the other, to prevent his tender fingers being hurt by the sting! I say it puts me in a passion to see this archer—toxophilite, I beg pardon—after putting himself into the most approved position, and with difficulty sending forty or fifty little arrows, not clothyard shafts, eighty or ninety yards, some to the right, and others to the left, to the danger of his surrounding ad-

mirers — receive the congratulations of his friends, and a silver bauble from the hand of some beautiful girl, for having, by great good luck, put *one* arrow out of the lot into some part of a target, six feet in diameter. But I am wandering as far from my subject as toxophilites' arrows do from the mark at which they are aimed.

Mr. Nathan Nevermiss, the hero of this tale, — he shall be his own historian, when I have properly introduced and described him, — was a fellow commoner of St. Mark's College, and a constant visiter in our common room, where his agreeable manners, witty conversation, and vocal powers, rendered him an acceptable guest. In person he was tall and thin, with a face that would have made a comedian's fortune — it was naturally so very ugly ; and he had increased its ugliness by screwing it up into a wrinkled cumulus, in his efforts to remedy the short-sightedness with which he was so much afflicted, as to be obliged at last to wear spectacles constantly. He was never seen to smile, even at his own jokes, though they threw all his friends into convulsions. His laugh, if it could be called such, was a sepulchral oh ! hah ! which issued from his chest without any sympathetic movement of the muscles of his face. His whole appearance indicated ill health and bodily weakness, so much so indeed that a Wiltshire farmer, who was travelling with him one very windy day, on the outside of a coach, overcome by his humane feelings, said to him, " Put down thy umberelly, lad, or thee'll be blowed right ath'ert that volla veild." But appearances, in his case as in many others, were deceitful : he was one of the most powerful men of his day, and had never cost his parents a shilling for physic since he was inoculated and got over the measles and hooping-cough. He used to amuse his friends by tying a kitchen-poker round his neck, lifting two half-hundred weights, and knocking them together over his head, and other feats of strength ; his hands, though thin and bony, were so very strong that he could crush a pewter measure with ease, and could have strangled the American sea-serpent if he had been lucky enough to get him within his grasp.

As a proof of his powers of compression, I will relate an anecdote which I heard from one of his friends.

As they were walking along Fleet Street, arm-in-arm, they observed a very suspicious-looking character dodging them, and at last, as they stopped to look in at a print-shop, endeavouring to extract their handkerchiefs. " Wait a minute," said Nathan, " I'll have him." They moved on, and the pickpocket, taking advantage of a favourable rush of passengers, put his hand into Nathan's coat-pocket. He seized it immediately, and in spite of all the fellow's exertions to release himself, held him as in a blacksmith's vice.

" Let me go, sir — pray let me go ! I'll never again — oh — oh — pray, sir ! " and the fellow roared so loudly, and performed so

many extraordinary gyrations, as to attract a large crowd, who could not tell what to make of it. Nathan, however, walked on very quietly, increasing the strength of his grasp, until he dragged the man, now pale with pain, and utterly unable to do any thing but groan, through Temple Bar, and into the first apothecary's shop he saw, where he released him, and pulling out half-a-crown, laid it on the counter, and coolly requested Mr. Bolus "to give that poor fellow a lotion."

Mr. Bolus kindly inquired how he was hurt.

"How? Why I presume he has left his own pocket-handkerchief at home, and in trying to borrow mine, my rascally tailor has made the pocket so small, that he has crushed his hand in attempting to get it out again." The thief had fainted from excess of agony.

I shall relate one other circumstance as a proof of his great bodily strength and courage, which created a great sensation at the time it happened, not only in Oxford, but in the surrounding neighbourhood.

He had walked over to a village, about two miles from Oxford, to dine with a friend who had taken lodgings there for the vacation, and when night came, the darkness was so intense, that every effort was made to induce him to sleep there, and return to Oxford in the morning, but in vain. He laughed at the idea of the danger of falling into a ditch or the hands of robbers, and set out by the nearest cut across the fields. He found his way with difficulty, and was congratulating himself on reaching the last gate, which opened into the turnpike-road within half a mile of the town, when he heard the voices of three men in conversation. He supposed, however, that they were merely labourers returning to their homes after indulging to rather a late hour at some public-house; he therefore leaped the gate, and saying "good night," passed quickly by them.

It was still dark, but his eyes having become accustomed to the darkness, he could just see that one of the three was a very tall, stout man, and the other two much shorter, and that all were dressed as bargemen usually are.

At that period there was only one house in this part of the suburbs; it stood in a walled garden, and divided the turnpike-road from the footpath. Thinking it would be lighter in the road than on the path, he turned back and passed the men again, intending to go round the wall, at the corner of which they were now standing, but as he passed them he was knocked violently against the wall by a blow from behind. He turned round, and saw the stoutest man in the act of repeating the blow, but he warded it off, and knocked him down: the other two then came upon him. He kept them at bay by striking at them, and retreating to the gate over

which he had jumped into the turnpike-road, intending if possible to leap over it again, and trust to his legs and the darkness for his escape. Before he could accomplish this, the stoutest man again came up, and seizing a large stone from a heap placed near for the repair of the roads, hurled it at him with such force as to knock him backwards into a deep but dry ditch. The ruffian threw himself upon him, and seizing him by the neckcloth tried to strangle him with one hand, and to tear out his watch with the other, his two companions looking on and with dreadful oaths and imprecations urging him to murder him.

In this dreadful strait his presence of mind did not forsake him, but lifting the fellow with his left elbow he contrived to take his penknife from his waistcoat-pocket with his right hand and to open it. "He could," as he said, "have ripped the fellow up, but had not the heart to kill a fellow-creature." He, however, drew the knife sharply across his wrist, and divided all the tendons of the hand which was grasping his throat. The fellow gave a sharp, shrill cry, and fell over him as though he had fainted. As no time was to be lost, he sprung to his feet, and seizing the stone with which he had been assailed, ran at the nearest of the two men who were still on the bank, and felled him to the ground. The third man fled towards Oxford, and Nathan pursued him some yards, but, in trying to follow him over a stile which led into the fields to the left, he found himself too weak from the loss of blood which was still pouring from his nose and mouth. Thinking the other two might again attack him, he staggered on as well as he could to the turnpike-gate, and knocked the gatekeeper up.

They obtained the assistance of the watchman, and returned with lanterns to the scene of the outrage, but found no traces of the perpetrators. In the ditch, however, was a large pool of blood, which must have flowed from the wrist of the wounded man.

We had in Oxford, at that time, a very clever police-officer, called Jack Smith; Mr. Nathan went to his house, and knocking him up informed him of the circumstances, described the men as well as he could, and then retired to bed.

In the morning, Jack rose before daylight, and went to all the houses in St. Thomas's parish, where the bargemen generally lodge, but could not find the men he sought. He learnt, however, at the canal wharf, that a boat had left at daybreak for Banbury, with two men on board, and another driving the horse. The description of the captain tallied exactly with that given to him of the tallest and stoutest of the three, and his suspicions of his being the man he "wanted" were confirmed by hearing that he had asked a bystander to "cast off the rope for him, for he had hurt his left hand."

Without explaining the reasons for his inquiries, lest a hint

should be given to his men, he went to Mr. Nathan's rooms, and, after a hearty breakfast, drove him to Banbury. They left their gig in the town, and walked down to the house by the canal side, where the bargemen resorted, and, under pretence of asking about a boat-load of timber which they expected, sat down in the little parlour and called for refreshments.

After waiting some hours, a boat came in, and a tall stout man, with his left hand tied up in a handkerchief, came on shore, and walked into the taproom. Jack followed him, and telling him he wanted to speak with him a minute in the passage, asked him, "How he came to knock the gentleman about so last night, as well as robbing him of his watch?"

"Knocked him about," said the man, taken by surprise and thrown off his guard, "I wish I had murdered him, for he has maimed me for life."

This was quite enough for Jack. His prisoner was handcuffed, and in Oxford gaol, within four hours from the time he was taken; the other two were also secured.

At the ensuing assizes all were found guilty. Two were transported, and the stout man sentenced to death, and left for execution, without a prospect of respite or reprieve.

Nathan, though he knew the sentence was a just one, and the punishment deserved, "had not the heart" to be the cause of the premature death of any one—even of a man who had had no mercy on him. He sent up memorials and petitions to the Home Secretary, but without effect. He then went up to town and requested a personal interview, which was granted. The result, however, was the same; no mercy could be extended in such a case. A second and a third interview were granted him; and so intense was the agony he displayed, and so earnest were his prayers for mercy on the criminal for *his* sake, that the secretary at length yielded to his entreaties, and he returned to Oxford with the document which commuted the sentence to transportation for life.

Had he failed, and the man been hanged, there is but little doubt he would have been in a lunatic asylum for the rest of his days. Such was Mr. Nathan Nevermiss in the serious scenes of life.

"In war a lion, but in peace a lamb."

One evening, as he was sitting in the common-room, entertaining the company as usual with his jests and tales, and making every body laugh but himself, which made them laugh ten times more, the subject of shooting came on the *tapis*, and at the request of one of the party he told the following tale.

"I was always very fond of shooting, and so I am now, but not nearly so madly attached to it as I was. A newly-married man is

generally very sweet upon his wife for the first month or two—but somehow or another the heat of this attachment cools down by degrees. My double-barrel gun was my wife—made by Dupe. It was a tinderbox of course, for percussions were not invented then. I did love her dearly. She was seldom out of my arms. With her in my hand I was happy, though it could not be called *single* blessedness. Like all human wives, if I *overloaded* her with kindness she was apt to kick, and like some of them had a way of ‘*going off*’ in another man’s arms,’ as readily as in my own; though when she had done so she did not wait for the newspapers to publish the affair, but gave the *report* of it herself. She *was* a beauty. I can truly say I was wedded to her, and what is more than some husbands can say, kept her in such good order that she never ran *rusty*—oh! oh! hah!

“During the last three or four days of August I was always diligently employed in screwing and unscrewing, oiling and wiping the locks and barrels—polishing the stock—selecting flints and agates—cutting out stamps—drying powder and measuring out shot—selecting and greasing boots and shoes—examining jackets and gaiters—in fact, seeing over and over again that every thing was ready for ‘the first.’

“I had a dog then, called Don; an old Spanish pointer, with a coarse short stern, and a face with a nose like a nigger’s, slit in two. He combined in his person, which was somewhat of the largest, all the qualifications of pointer, spaniel, water-dog, and retriever—I might add greyhound, or rather lurcher, for if he came upon a hare in a furze-bush, or a bit of short cover, he was pretty nearly sure to pounce upon her before she could get many yards from him. He never attempted this, however, unless she started before I could come up within shot. One other virtue I must not omit—for he was more celebrated for that than any of his sporting qualities;—he was the greatest and most successful thief that ever lived. Our college cook used to hate the sight of him; for he would slip into the kitchen, get under the dresser, and watch his every movement; and the moment poor Coquus’s back was turned, seize upon a loin of lamb or mutton, or indeed any joint within his reach, for he was not particular, and run off as hard as he could scamper—sometimes with an additional *tail* behind him, consisting of the cook, cook’s mates, scullery wenches, and half a dozen of the scout’s boys, armed with the readiest missiles; the pursuit was useless if he once got clear of the gates and the porter’s whip, and the four or five pounds of meat was put down in my battels at ten or twelve pounds, and I was fined five shillings for letting my dog come into college.

“As for sleeping a wink on the night of the last day of August, without dreaming of what was to happen the next day, was out of



the question ; the moment I had closed my eyes there I was in a turnip-field, old Don beating about, and brushing the heavy dew off the leaves as he bounded along ; all of a sudden down he dropped—his tail as stiff as a poker, and his head a little turned towards me, winking at me with one eye, as much as to say, ‘ here they are, master, come up ; ’ then I would try to walk up, but my feet refused to leave the spot, or perhaps if I did walk up, and spring the birds, I could not get my gun off, though I pulled and pulled as hard as I could. Sometimes the hammers would go down as gently as if the spring was broken ; at others, the report was not louder than an air-gun’s, and I could see the shot skim gently through the air, and hit the birds without hurting them in the least. To dream that I had left powder-flash, shot-belt, or some other requisite behind me, after walking six miles to the ground, was a very common occurrence ; and old Don was often transformed into a pig or a sheep, and the partridges into tame ducks or fowls, and sometimes into harpies, with the faces of my father and mother, and the rest of the family, watching my proceedings with their spectacles on. I would turn, and turn again, but it was of no avail ; the instant sleep returned, some annoying or ridiculous vision would present itself to my ‘ mind’s eye ; ’ and I rose feverish and unrefreshed long before daylight, dressed in the dark, and groping my way to old Don’s kennel, started off and sat upon the gate of the field I had marked out for the commencement of my beat, until the sun rose, and I could begin the slaughter according to Act of Parliament. Many such nights have I passed when a *young* sportsman.

“ We, that is I and old Don, were pretty well known within twenty miles of Oxford. As I never was a pot-hunter, and cared nothing about the game after it was killed, and generally made a point of seeing the farmers’ men pretty liberally, and joked and laughed with every body I met— I often got a day or two’s shooting where other men failed. The keepers, too, would sometimes request me to assist them in making up a basket of game for presents ; and a pound of tobacco, and a gross of pipes, has insured me the entire shooting of a farm for the season. Somehow I managed to go out somewhere every day.

“ One day I received a note, rather a dirty one, from the keeper of Lord——, who lived about eleven miles from Oxford ; it ran thus :

“ ‘ Sur,

“ ‘ Oblig me by kummin over the day after nex. I wants to kill a hep of gam. Master’s oldest sun’s going to stan for M. P., and I’m to guv all the lectors as will vote for us, a basket of gam. You nos our manners—kum cross lore farm, and shut all you sees in your rode.

“ ‘ Your obedient Survant,

“ ‘ LONG TOM.

“ ‘P. S. Kum arly, and the onder kipper will git brekfist reddy.’ ”

“ As his lordship’s manors were well stocked with game, I did not hesitate a moment about accepting Long Tom’s invitation, and started on foot as soon as it was light, with old Don. I kept the turnpike-road for about five miles, and then turned into a stubble-field, and made my way across the country for three or four miles, as straight as I could for the lower farm. I got two or three shots as I walked along, and had just marked a fine covey into a bit of Swedes, and was going through the gateway to kill two or three brace of them, when I was interrupted by a tall, strapping, keeper-looking fellow, who opened the negotiation in a loud blustering tone, by inquiring,

“ ‘Who gin you toleration to shoot here?’—‘What’s that to you?’ I replied, walking up to old Don, who was standing the birds I had marked down.

“ ‘Who gin you toleration to shoot here, I say?’ was repeated in so loud a tone, that whurrh! whurrh! rose the birds, and bang, bang went my Dupe. I had pocketed the brace, and was loading again, when Snob, who from instinct had waited to mark the rest of the covey, resumed his remarks.

“ ‘Do you know as you’re a trespassing? I’ll just trouble you for your name and ’tificate. I’ll lay an inflammation agin you.’

“ ‘If,’ said I, ‘you ’ll show me your authority, you shall know all about it.’

“ ‘Thority!—d—’thority!—I am keeper here.’

“ ‘So any other fool may tell me, but I ’m not obliged to believe him—show me your deputation, and I ’ll show you my certificate,’ I added, walking on my way after the birds. Snob walked alongside, and, after a great many strong remarks, which will not bear repeating, placed his great person between me and the stile, over which I was going to climb into the adjoining field, and told me, with an oath, of course, that ‘I should not go a step further unless I showed him my ’tificate, or gave him my name.’

“ ‘I don’t choose to be *bullied* into any thing, so I politely and positively declined.

“ ‘Then I’ll be—if I don’t take your gun!’ said he, coming towards me.

“ ‘Stand back,’ cried I; ‘if you dare to touch me or the gun I’ll shoot you,’ and the *click, click*, as I cocked both barrels, made him turn as pale as death, and hesitate to attack me.

“ ‘You cowardly, wizenfaced, scraggy-looking skeleton, if it was not for thy loaded gun there, I ’d give thee a sound thrashing.’

“ ‘You would?’ said I.

“ ‘Do thee just put thy gun down and try.’

"I fired off both barrels into the air, and laid the gun down, telling old Don to 'mind it,' and, taking off my spectacles and coat, said to him :—

"'Now, you great overgrown bully, pull off your jacket, and I'll teach you a lesson in civility you will not soon forget.'

"The contest did not last very long. He swung his great powerful arms about like the sails of a windmill, and, had he hit me, would probably have stunned me; but I hit straight at his head, and sprung back from his blows until I had reduced him to my own strength, then I closed with him, and got his bullet-shaped head under my arm, which I pummelled until I was tired, and then threw him from me. He fell completely beaten, and for a time unable to move. At length he rose, and, wiping the blood from his face, said, with a most vindictive grin,

"'I'll have thee up for this—here's my deppytation.'

"'And here,' said I, 'is my certificate, if you can read it.'

"He took it, and with the one eye which was not closed by my fist, read, 'Nathan Nevermiss, St. Mark's Coll. Oxford,' and exclaimed,

"'Well, if this is n't a pretty go. You're the very gen'laman as Long Tom sent me to meet, and I've got breakfast ready for you in my cottage; but you're not the least like—'

"'The gentleman you expected to meet,' interrupted I; 'but if you had only been civil instead of trying to bully me, you would have saved yourself a sound beating, and me a great deal of unnecessary exertion.'

"'I humbly beg your pardon, sir, and if you'll do me a favour you'll oblige me; don't tell any body as you whopp'd me so, or I shall never hear the last of it—but 'specially my missus, or she'd whop me too. I'll tell her I tumbled and fell with my face on a stump.'

"I consented to keep the matter a secret, and walked to his cottage, where I found Long Tom and an excellent breakfast waiting for me.

"We were joined by two neighbouring farmers, and as the hares and pheasants were abundant, we killed enough in two or three hours to supply all the 'lectors in the county. It was downright murder, and more like killing tame fowls and sheep than *feræ naturæ*; nothing like sport in it—human spaniels with sticks in their hands to put up the game instead of the exciting music of the dogs. I was quite sick of it, and as I had a little plan of my own to execute in my way back, I declined a very hearty invitation to dine with the farmers, and set out on my return.

"In my route lay a snug cover of sixty or seventy acres full of game. It belonged to a man, who, in his younger days, had been a tradesman in Oxford, and one of the greatest poachers that ever lived; but by the death of a relative he had come into a con-

siderable property, of which the farm on which this cover stood formed a part.

“He was a low-bred, nasty-tempered individual, but his money had the usual effect of making him what is called a country-gentleman, and a county magistrate. As soon as he became a beak he showed his talons, and had spring-guns, steel-traps, and spikes, set all over his estates; would not allow a cur of any kind to be kept by a tenant or cottager, and sent every man to prison whom he suspected of wiring a hare, or trapping a rabbit. He shot all the foxes in his covers, and spiked the gapways and gates, to prevent the hounds coming upon his grounds, and allowed no one a day’s sporting of any kind. The game that he killed he sent up to London, exchanging it for wine and fish, and kept all his servants on rabbits, until they nauseated the very sight of a scut.

“It is needless to say he was not a popular character. I owed him a grudge for having threatened to exchequer me for following a wounded bird, and picking it up on his land. He did not know me by sight, only by name; and I now resolved to put in execution a plan that I had formed some time before. I walked boldly up to his house and rung the hall-bell as loudly as I could. The bailiff, who lived in the back part of the mansion, came with marks of alarm on his face, and dinner in his mouth, to see what so unusually loud an application of the bell-rope could mean.

“‘Is Mr. Tapes at home?’

“‘No, sir.’

“‘So I suspected, and it was just what I wanted.

“‘Is he gone to Oxford?’

“‘Yes, sir, and will not be home until dinner.’

“‘Could I speak with Mr. Scrape, the bailiff?’

“‘I’m Mr. Scrape, sir.’

“‘Oh! then,’ continued I, ‘that is lucky. I have a letter to deliver to Mr. Tapes or yourself.’

“This letter I had prepared some time before—it was a regular forgery, and purported to be written by an attorney in Oxford, who was supposed to be so deep in Mr. Tapes’s secrets as to have him completely under his thumb. One of his clerks wrote it, and was even then so successful in copying his master’s hand, that no one could detect the imposition; and so much more so, afterwards, that he got 500*l* out of the banker’s hands by a forged check, and escaped to America with the amount.

“Mr. Scrape read and examined the letter minutely. The contents surprised him, as he was peremptorily ordered, in the absence of his master, to show me an hour or two’s shooting in the thickest part of his preserves, alleging, as a reason for so unusual a proceeding, that he was under considerable obligations to my father.

“Mr. Scrape seemed puzzled how to act. He could not doubt

the genuineness of the document, and knew that his master did not dare to refuse any request that his lawyer made to him. Seeing his hesitation, I told him that my time was but short, and I should feel obliged by his giving me some luncheon while he summoned the keeper, and, without waiting for his answer, showed myself into a back room, through the open door of which I saw a table with a whity-brown table-cloth, and some dishes upon it.

“ ‘I ’ll trouble you,’ said I, sitting down and helping myself to some rabbit-pie, and old Don to a large piece of bacon, ‘for a very large mug of very cold pump water and some brandy ; of if you ’ve none at hand, a bottle of sherry will do.’

“ ‘Mr. Scrape said, ‘he really was—very much surprised—very sorry—very glad—wished his master was at home—was sorry he was out ; but seeing me progressing coolly with my lunch, and not at all disposed to yield my point, he left the room, and returned with a bottle of very good sherry. When I had finished it and my meal, I informed him I was quite ready, and, taking up my gun, walked out directly for the cover ; Mr. Scrape following and talking to himself.

“ ‘Oh dear ! oh dear ! what shall I do ?’

“ ‘Do ?’ said I, ‘unlock that gate, and take care and leave it unlocked. As the keeper is not here, I and my old dog shall do very well.’

“ ‘Mr. Scrape hesitated, and wished I would but wait till his master came home. He would be home punctually at five, and I should have an hour’s sport then—he never allowed any one to go into the cover. My only reply was opening the gate and letting fly right and left at two fine cock pheasants that old Don had flushed, and begging Mr. Scrape to have the goodness to pick them up for me. .

“ ‘The report of the gun, as I suspected it would, brought the keeper and two assistants to the spot.

“ ‘ ‘Mr. Scrape, I need not detain you any longer—I am obliged by your accompanying me thus far. Keeper, send away your dogs and men ; you will be quite enough here.’ And I walked on, and banged away at hares and pheasants as fast as I could load and fire, leaving the keeper and Mr. Scrape to talk over so unusual a circumstance. The keeper, when he had done his consultation, followed me, and very civilly begged to see my certificate—I gave him the document, which I knew he could not read—for I had taken care to ascertain the fact.

“ ‘ ‘Your name is, I see, sir——?’

“ ‘ ‘Yes,’ said I, nodding ; ‘you see—Snugs, of St. Paul’s College—it’s all right—if you come into Oxford, pray call and take some refreshments in my name—you ’ll not forget it—Snugs, of St. Paul’s,’ and I returned the licence into my pocket-book.

"The man showed his wisdom, by scratching his head, and making me a bow, saying, 'Well! how master could ever think of letting you or any body come a-shooting here, I can't think.'

"Your master,' I replied, 'is a very liberal man, I'm told, and nothing gives him so much pleasure as showing his friends sport, when they come to see him.'

"Ees—when they *do* come to see him.'

"I could not afford to lose any time, so I went on shooting, and very soon killed four or five brace of hares, and eight or ten of pheasants. I told the keeper I was quite satisfied, and begged him to thank his master in my name, and to assure him of my regret at not finding him at home to receive me.

"Thee isn't going to take away all the game?'

"The game!—decidedly—all I can carry—I am sure your master, if he was at home, would be glad—'

"Then he is at home—for there's his voice," cried the keeper, as a loud 'hilloh! hilloh!' reached his ears.

"That your master's voice?" said I, apparently much pleased; 'run instantly, and tell him I'm delighted he's returned.'

"Away went the keeper, and away went I—in a contrary direction, as fast as four brace of pheasants, which I had managed to cram into my pockets, would allow me, leaving the rest of the game for my host. I knew, if I could once get clear out of cover, I could beat them all at a run—but how to get out was the question, as the gates and palings were all spiked. I tried a *ruse*, an artful dodge, which answered very well. I called old Don to heel, and, giving him a sign to keep close, doubled upon my pursuers, whose voices I could just hear, and, turning down the cover, by a ride which ran parallel to the one by which they were going to meet me, as they thought, threw myself flat upon my face, at the bottom of a thick thorn-bush, and lay close until they had passed.

"Though they could not see me, I could see and hear them distinctly; there was Mr. Tapes, and the very lawyer, whose name I had just taken the liberty of using, Mr. Scrape, and the keeper, with his two assistants, and a groom, leading the two nags, from which the host and his attorney had just dismounted.

"Mr. Tapes was red with rage, the attorney still redder. Mr. Scrape and the keeper were excusing themselves in the best way they could, and the groom was winking at the two underkeepers, and applying his thumb in a peculiar way to his nose with his fingers distended, plainly meaning, 'this *is* fun.'

"To dare to forge my name,' said the lawyer.

"To dare to drink my sherry,' said Mr. Tapes.

"And eat the rabbit-pie,' said Scrape.

"To kill ten brace of pheasants,' said the keeper.

"I'll hang him for forgery,' continued the lawyer.

“ ‘I’ll prosecute him for poaching,’ said Mr. Tapes—‘ what’s his name?’ ”

“ ‘Snugs,’ replied the keeper.

“ ‘Don,’ replied Mr. Scrape.

“ ‘Don’t you wish you may catch him?’ said the groom to the under-keepers.

“ I had heard quite enough to convince me I should get into trouble if I was caught; I therefore started the minute they were out of my sight, and ran as hard as I could for nearly a mile. I then pulled up, and, looking round me, and seeing nothing to indicate a pursuit, congratulated myself on having escaped, and walked on at an easy pace, planning with myself how I should evade the inquiries that would certainly be set on foot.

“ In the midst of my cogitations I was interrupted by a loud but distant shout, and looking round, saw Mr. Scrape on a pony, and the two under-keepers, about a quarter of a mile behind me, evidently on my trail. I knew I could beat the men in running, but the pony was four to two—legs I mean—against me.

“ I laid a trap for Mr. Scrape. I ran boldly out across the middle of a grass field, at the top of my speed, and made for a gap I saw in the fence opposite me; I jumped through, and stood quite still on the other side. Mr. Scrape gave a loud view hilloh! and galloped after me, leaving his two attendants behind him, and most gallantly rammed his pony over the ditch where I was standing. I caught the bridle, and, turning him short round, succeeded in unseating his rider so far, that a gentle application of my hand to the sole of his boot threw him out of the saddle on to the ground. I mounted in his stead, and whistling to Don, went off as hard as the pony could carry me, until I thought I was fairly out of danger of my enemies, and had sundry misgivings about being taken up for horse-stealing.

“ I rode to the nearest public, and gave a boy sixpence to ride the pony home with my compliments to his master and thanks for the loan of him. The landlord of this house was an old sportsman, and we were very well acquainted; I therefore told him of my adventures, which amused him very much; and as Tapes was a very bitter enemy of his, he readily promised secrecy as to my name and college, and relieved me of my anxiety about getting back to Oxford undiscovered, by putting his horse into a light cart, and driving me, by a roundabout road, home to our college gates.

“ On the following morning, I confess I was very anxious to know if any and what inquiries or proceedings had been instituted; but was afraid to venture out lest I should meet some of the parties. My appearance is rather peculiar, hoh! hoh! hah! so I sent my

scout down to St. Paul's College to act as scout, and learn the tactics of the enemy.

"Mr. Scrape and the keeper had both been to inquire of the porter if a Mr. Snugs was there, and had described my personal appearance so accurately that no one who had ever seen me could mistake me. The porter, however, was too old a stager to betray me, and the bailiff and keeper returned as wise as they came.

"I took the advice of my scout and altered my usual dress, and by cutting off my whiskers, and substituting an eye-glass for my spectacles, looked a very different character. Still I was very uneasy; I did not so much fear the wrath of Mr. Tapes as that of his attorney, and turned over in my mind every plan I could think of for deprecating his anger; but without success, until I fortunately recollected that one of our men who happened to be up was intimately acquainted with him. I called upon him, and told him of my impudent conduct of the day before, and of my fears of the result of it.

"After listening to and laughing at my tale—for somehow every body laughs at me—he very goodnatureedly promised to set matters straight before night.

"About seven in the evening, I received a message from him begging me to come over to his rooms. I went, and to my great surprise was formally introduced to the attorney by my real name, which he did not seem to recognize. He was already up to the degree of "Merry," from the wine he had drunk, and we pushed the bottle round so rapidly, and drank so many irresistible toasts, that he got boisterous in his mirth. I told him all my old anecdotes which were new to him, and sung him three or four comic songs, which pleased him so much that he shook me warmly by the hand, and assured me that he should be proud to know more of me, and to render me any assistance at any time that lay in his power.

"My good sir," said I, 'I stand in need of your professional aid at this moment.'

"I'm sorry—that is—glad to hear it—command my services; but what's the crime?"

"Forgery."

"Good heavens! forgery! On whom?"

"Yourself," and I told him in as amusing a way as I could everything that had occurred at Tape Hall.

"He tried to look serious but could not, and after laughing heartily, promised to relieve me from all anxiety, if I would *merely* tell him who had imitated his writing so closely that he himself could not tell whether it was his own or not.

"This I respectfully and firmly declined doing, as it might be prejudicial to another's interests. At last he freely forgave me, and



engaged to give me a note to old Tapes, which would prevent his instituting any proceedings against me.

"He kept his promise, and with the note which he had written for me, I rode over to Tape Hall and found the owner at home.

"Mr. Scrape, who opened the door to me, knew me in spite of my disguise, and chuckled to think I should pay for the rabbit-pie and his tumble.

" 'Mr. Scrape,' said I, 'here is a real note, not a forged one, for your master.'

"He slammed the door in my face, but returned in a few minutes, and in a very humble tone desired me to walk in.

"I found Mr. Tapes evidently in a bad humour at being compelled to pardon so grievous an offender as myself, but I brought him into a good humour at last, by flattering him on his merits as a country gentleman, and a county magistrate, and by expressing a wish to repay his hospitality of the day before, by giving him a return bottle of sherry in college.

"A sovereign to the keeper and his subs made them so very polite that they hinted at 'my having another chance at the pheasants when I knew their master was out.'"

## CHAPTER VI.

"AND what," said the vice-principal, "did the letter and parcel contain?"

"That," said the Bursar, "is at present a mystery."

"And so it seems likely to remain," said Broome; "after quoting these words from my No. I. you ought to have explained the mystery in No. II., Mr. Priggins, if you had any *gumption* in you; but you seem to treat the public very coolly, and ramble about, first to hunting, then to boating, then to shooting, and then to great-go parties, without any sort of order or arrangement."

"Yes," said Dusterly, "he's as herratic as *Boots*."

"*Boots*," cried I, never having heard the simile before, "what *can* you mean by that figure of speech?"

"Figger? why hi intends to hintimate that you wanders habout jist like that figger of the gentleman has one sees in the evens of a bright night, hall kivered over with stars, and in the picter books of hasteronomy—don't they call im *boots*?"

"Oh!" said I, smiling in spite of myself, "I presume you mean *Bootes*—the constellation?"

"You may call im Bo-o-tes, or what you please—hi calls im Boots, jist has hi calls this," pointing to the tankard, "*beer*, and not *be-er*," replied Dusterly, evidently offended at my questioning

the correctness of his pronounciation as he calls it. "You hought to be auled hover the coals, h afore you gets hinto an abit of being so dilatory."

"Read that," said I, indignantly throwing down before Broome the Number of the *N. M. M.* which contains my No. I.

"Read hit hout," suggested Dusterly.

Broome obeyed, and read thus: "I mean, as sayings and doings occur to me, to note those which may be published without hurting the feelings of any individual—without any order or arrangement. Like the Irish beggar, I shan't 'wait to *pick* them, but take them as *they come*."

"That's hall very well," remarked Dusterly, "but hif we ad hadopted that here plan with hour master's rooms, hi'm hof hopinion we should ave got 'the *sack*' long hago. Horder's hevery thing, has the vice-chancellor hused to hobserve when e went to the theaytre in procession."

"Yes," replied Broome, "and as the commercial gentleman said to his customers, 'much obliged for cash for last account—but an *order* is the thing I want.'"

"True hagin," cried Dusterly, "hand what his the speaker of the ouse of commons hallays saying? Why *horder! horder!!* to be sure."

"Talking of Bagmen," said Broome, knocking the ashes out of his pipe, and preparing to replenish, "or commercial gents, as they call themselves nowadays, I will tell you an anecdote if you are inclined to listen to it."

"Hoh, hah! hout with the hanicdote while you fills hagin," cried Dusterly, "and then it won't be ha long un."

One long vacation," commenced Broome, "I went to spend a few days with an old friend of mine, who keeps a commercial house at Witney—"

"What! ha hinn you mean? ha otel?"

"Yes—an inn, or hotel, which you please. As we were sitting smoking our pipes in the little bar one night, the waiter came in to say that the 'gent. as travels in the leather line would be much obliged to master if he would allow him to take a pipe in the bar, as he was all alone by his-self.' My friend the landlord, sent 'his compliments, and should be delighted to see him.'

"In a few minutes we heard a violent altercation under the window, a strange voice exclaiming—

"'You ought to be athamed of yourthelf, thir; you call yourthelf a waither—why, thir, I could thpit a bether!'"

"And the waiter, in a tone deprecatory expressing his sorrow for what had occurred.

"'I thall thell your mathler, thir; you'll forth me to thange my houthe.'

“The door opened, and a very little gentleman entered, apparently very angry. My friend offered him a chair, and introduced him to me as Mr. Sadly, saying at the same time, that ‘he was afraid something unpleasant had occurred.’

“The little man, who certainly was one of the ugliest specimens I had seen for some time, for he was frightfully marked with the small-pox, squinted horribly, and had no palate, which caused him to lisp very much, sat down, and holding his left foot in his hand, as it rested on his right knee, said, he was ‘thurprithed to find tho much inattenthion in tho thelebrathed a houth; why, thir, I ordered a glath of neguth, and told that fool of a waitther not to make it too thweet, and to put a thmall thlithe of lemon in it. Well, thir, the fool emptieth the moith thugar bathin into it, and athidth it from the vinegar-crueth, I’m thure of it, thir, I’m thure of it.’

“The landlord, though he knew the statement was false, as he had manufactured the negus himself, offered to discharge the man at once.

“‘No, thir, but if it occurth again I mutht thange my houth; a bothom of brandy, if you pleathe—muth obliged, thir.’

“My friend, after giving him his dose, and expressing his regret at what had occurred, hoped he should not lose his custom.

“‘Why, thir, you thee, thir, when I’m onthe ill-uthed at a houth I never go to that houth again. Onthe, thir, I drove Mrs. Thadly, my wife, roundth with me one of my journieth. Well, thir, we came to Thevenelmth—Thevenelmth, in Thuthex, a very flinthy plathe, and capital for cuthing thoeth to pietheth; I thravel with leatherth, thir, but the thrade’t had—billth, thir, no cath paymenth—billth at thix monthth—and then they wantth them renewed; do a little in pathenth, but my commithion, two and a half per thent don’t pay for thigarth. Well, thir, when we got to Thevenelmth, I drove in ath uthual, and gave my whip—my bethth whip to the othler; it wath a whip, thir, that I never uthe, ecthept Mrs. Thadly ith with me. Well, thir, I thaw the thingth took out of the thrap, while Mrs. Thadly went to thee the room. I ordered thea and thoathth, and a thop, and wath very well thathithfied. Well, thir, I wenth out to give my horth the hith oathth, and while I wath thanding theeing him eath, a thaithe and four drove up, and I heard the landlord thay, Thow the ladieth into number then. Now, number then wath our thleeping room, tho, thir, I came out and I thaid, Mithter King, thir, thaid I, are you thenthible of my having taken polhethion of number then? Well, thir, inththead of thayng he wath thorry, and all that, he thurned up hith nothe, and thaid they were genthefolkth, and mutht have the room, and that number ninethcen was good enough for uth.

“ ‘ Well, thir, I thlood thtill in amathement, and thaid, What do you mean by that, thir? ”

“ ‘ Why thaid he, you littlthle inthignificant athomy, when you’re at home you thleep under the counther. ”

“ ‘ Now, thir, I can only thay that me and Mrs. Thadly thleep in a nithe four-poth, with dimithy curthainth and whithe taleth; tho I thaid, What do you mean by that, feller?—I called him *feller*—and I would have knocked him down, thir, but he wath thix feet high. ”

“ ‘ Well, thir, thayth he, if you don’t like the houthe, you may go over the way; and tho I thould, but my horthie had not eath hith oaths. ”

“ ‘ Well, thir, we went to bed in number ninetheen, and wath bit by the bugth frightful. The nectht morning I ordered my thrap out, and paid the bill, and had jutht theated Mrs. Thadly in her theat when the whip wath mithing—my betht whip ath I keep for Mrs. Thadly. Well, thir, we thearched high and low, and where do you think I found it? Why, thir, there wath that great thix-foot lout of a land-lord a flogging thix great large thowth round the yard with it. ”

“ ‘ I did not *thay* any think, but I went to the other houthe ever thinthie; and never patheth Mither King but I turn up my nothe at him. ’ ”

Broome lit his pipe.

“ Well,” said Dusterly, “ his that hall? ”

“ That’s all,” replied Broome; “ I merely mentioned it AP-PRYPO DE BOOTS. ”

Dusterly did not relish the allusion to Boots, and rose and took his leave, and Broome with him. I began to consider with myself whether I had not better make the subject of this number—

#### SAM SMYTH’S MSS.

The readers of the *N. M. M.* may perchance recollect that our Bursar was summoned to Trevenny by Messrs. Nibson and Ink-spot, and returned to Oxford, bringing with him James Jobs, a MS., and a considerable quantity of the rain from heaven.

The vice-principal and our senior tutor had often pressed the Bursar to read the MS. to them in the common-room, but something or another had always occurred to prevent his complying with their wishes.

One evening, however, when they were by themselves, and wanted a fourth to make up a rubber, as they neither of them chose to take that convenient but troublesome gentleman called *dummy* for a partner, the Bursar sent me for James Jobs, who was now regularly *installed* as groom to his old half-master, and or-

dered him to go to his bureau and bring him the papers consigned to his care by his other and "better half" master.

When they were brought and James dismissed, the decanter replenished from "the old" bin, the candles snuffed and the fire poked into a cheerful blaze, the Bursar, telling me that I need not go, thus began :—

"The letter is directed," said he,

*"For the Bursar of St. Peter's College,  
Oxford, to the care of James Jobs."*

"My dear Bursar,

"I feel a presentiment, for which I cannot account, that I shall meet with a sudden and premature death. I am not inclined to be superstitious, but I cannot divest myself of the notion that I have received certain warnings to prepare to 'shuffle off this mortal coil.' I do not dread death more than other men, and have but too few of the goods of this world to make me loath to leave it; yet my spirits are depressed, my mind irritable, and my body nervous and debilitated. The only relief I find is, from violent and continued exercise, or employment in the free air of heaven. To-day I have walked several miles in visiting my poor but grateful flock : to-morrow I purpose having a long day's fishing in my little yacht."

"Poor fellow!" said the Bursar; "this was probably written the night before the accident," and on inquiry of James Jobs, it was found to be the case.

"I have but little society here, and my limited income, which will not allow me to shew my hospitable feelings to my friends, forbids my availing myself of their kindness as often as I might, were I enabled to repay it. I have whiled away many a tedious hour by writing an account of the events which occurred to me after we parted on quitting college. I buried the cares of the present in thoughts of the past. You, I believe, are the only friend I have left, and I flatter myself with the hope that the kindly feelings which you once entertained for me have not been obliterated by time and absence. Should the event, which I dread and expect, take place, I have ordered our old servant James to place my papers and this letter in your hands. I have only two requests to make, with which I feel certain you will comply—to pay my few debts by the sale of my furniture and books, and the paltry pittance that is due to me from my cure, and to take James into your service again for *my sake*. You will find in him, as I have done, that rare treasure, a true and faithful servant; and now farewell! Bestow sometimes a kindly thought on the memory of your old and attached friend,

"SAM SMYTH.

"Trevenny Parsonage,  
Cornwall."

As soon as the letter was read, by a very singular coincidence, the Bursar, the vice-principal, the tutor, and I, Peter Priggins, all pulled out our handkerchiefs, and began blowing our noses very violently—then the Bursar poked the fire as hard as he could—the vice-principal snuffed the candles—the tutor took a long pinch of snuff, and I rattled the glasses on the sideboard, and all four of us hemmed and hawed as if we had a fish-bone in our throats.

“This will never do,” said the Bursar, drawing his hand hastily across his eyes, “Peter, fill our glasses.” I obeyed, and the “Memory of poor Sam” was drunk—the MS. unfolded, and the Bursar read as follows :—

“Many years have passed, my dear fellow, since you and I were engaged in eating tough commons, and drinking thick, muddy undergraduate port at St. Peter’s; abusing tutors and duns, and venting our imprecations upon scouts and chapel-bells. I find, by the Oxford calendar, that you are still at college; and I have no doubt that as a Fellow and a Don, you see things with very different eyes now, and do not grumble so much as you were wont of yore at the amount of the Battels; seeing that, as a Bursar, you get very pretty pickings out of the men’s eatables; conspiring for that purpose with, and winking at the peccabilities of, the college Coquus and Promus; a crime of which you did not use to hesitate accusing your predecessor in your undergraduate days.

“I look upon the life of a resident college Fellow to be one of the happiest to be found in any condition of society; an income to satisfy every moderate wish—a little palace to dwell in—the best of every thing prepared without any trouble—no cares about household matters—no bother with servants—the best of society, and plenty of leisure for literary pursuits, with every facility for indulging in them that well-furnished libraries and reading-rooms can supply. Then, in the long vacation, hey for Baden-Baden, Wiesbaden, Rome, Vienna, Constantinople, or any other place, ‘where men of leisure do resort,’ and your month in London at your club without leaving any other thought behind you, but that your scout may not air your bed previously to your return, or that the common-room man may deduct some few bottles from your old and favourite bin for his own private use and enjoyment; and yet how few of you appreciate your happiness!

“Now here am I, a poor devil, with two curacies, that bring me in an income of 65*l.* per annum, which is paid me half-yearly, like servants’ wages, by Messrs. Nibson and Inkspot, my patron’s lawyers. It is true that I have a few pounds additional now and then, when I can touch the tender feeling of “my uncle”—not him of the “three balls”—but I have hardly enough to support myself and my one servant, and am often called upon to assist my poor hardworking parishioners, for they have no one else to look to, as

Lord Rentborough, the great man of the parish, (who, in other villages, generally assists the clergyman in relieving the wants of the poor) is an absentee.

"As to society, I have little or none except the neighbouring farmers; a kind-hearted, hospitable class of men, but not exactly calculated to entertain and amuse a man of literary tastes and habits. I have certainly plenty of leisure for reading, if I could get books to read; but in this distant corner of our island that is no easy matter. True that I have plenty of shooting and fishing, and a yacht to sail in; but fond as I am of all those sports, they 'pall upon my senses,' because I have no companion to share them with me. Then I am constantly annoyed by that lathy, lengthy, lout of legality, young Inkspot, to whom I'm compelled to give up half my parsonage or resign my curacy. The brute fancies, because he writes attorney-at-law to his name, that he must be a *gentleman*, and that his company must, consequently, be agreeable to me. But I will not contrast our situations further, lest you should get too strongly attached to college, even to quit it for your rectory and a wife. I have one consolation, however—the thought that you college Fellows generally *do* marry—somewhat late in life, and make the most peevish, grumbling, discontented maritals to be found any where in the habitable parts of the globe."

The Bursar looked at the vice-principal, and the vice-principal at the tutor. All three shook their heads Burleighiously, and drank a glass of wine, as much as to say, "That requires washing down—it's a crammer." The Bursar then went on with his tale.

"I will not stop to remind you of our undergraduate days, though I could recall to your mind many scenes that you most probably have forgotten. Our entering on the same day, chumming in the same rooms, joining the same set, and sharing the same amusements, must be still fresh in your memory. Our reading with the same tutor for our little and great goes, you cannot have forgotten; for little Pimply Pumpkin, as we, or rather you, christened the humbug, was too remarkable a character not to be remembered.

"I don't know how it may be now, but certainly in our day it was no very difficult thing to get a degree, and yet almost every man thought it requisite to employ a private tutor to cram him for his examination. College lectures were certainly a farce. Do you remember our friend Long John, who used always to come to Anabasis lecture—the only one in college—with his hands begrimed with gunpowder, his legs wetted up to the knees in a snipe-bog, and his shot-belt round his waist, scarcely hidden by his commoner's gown? I recollect perfectly his construing ο μεγας βασιλευς, 'the great mogul;' παθημινος εν διφρω, 'sitting in a ditch;' and μεθυομενος, 'being a little in liquor,' in spite of my prompting him rightly; and poor Pimply Pumpkin would sit and groan and mutter

something that was imperfectly heard, as his voice closely resembled the buzzing of a humble bee in a watering-pot. You have but little leisure or inducement to recall these scenes; I have. I have sat for hours re-enacting scenes of bygone days, and wishing myself back again in our snug rooms, with Peter Priggins preparing our night-caps for us; but I must not dwell on them longer, or you will close my papers with a full impression that I, the 'lively Sam Smyth,' as you were pleased to call me, am degenerated into a dreaming old twaddler.

"We parted with each other, if you remember, after taking our B. A.'s, and keeping our master's term, at that 'city of sweet smells, Birmingham. You were on your road to Liverpool, intending to cross to Ireland, on a visit to our mutual friend Brallaghan, who had promised you 'the finest salmon-fishing in the world, laying out county Galway;' I was journeying to my fond and anxious parents, who were raised several notches in their own estimation, by having a son a Bachelor of Arts.

"You must remember my governor, because he spent a week in Oxford, and dined with us every day in our rooms; but I dare say you knew little more of him than that he was a gentlemanly man—a *presentable* person; in order to render my adventures intelligible to you, I must enter a little into his history.

"The Smyths of Odleton, in Staffordshire, had for several generations kept the principal shop in the grocery line in that quiet and unpretending borough. Each generation added a little to the family fortune; and when my grandfather 'took to the business,' he realized, by his industry and attention, a considerable sum of money. Politics ran high in the town, and the Pittites and Foxites were so nearly matched, that at the ensuing election it was very doubtful which party would win the day. There were ten or eleven voters who were wise enough to consider that 10*l*, 20*l*, or 30*l*, for their 'vote and interest,' would be more successful in keeping their pots boiling, than all the fine speeches of the candidates, as to the 'right divine of kings,' or the measures of 'reform and retrenchment.'

"The names of these men were on my grandfather's books, with sundry sums unliquidated underneath them. The neighbouring family, who had generally returned one of its members on the Tory interest, had given great offence in the borough, in consequence of preventing the little snobs gathering nuts in their coppices, and not sending round the usual quantity of game; though it was strongly suspected that the keeper had converted the partridges, hares, and pheasants, into pounds, shillings, and pence, 'unbeknown' to his master, through the agency of his friend, the guard of the Oldeton mail. It was certain that he spent a great deal of money, and all his evenings at the Sun Inn, whence the



mail started, and that Jem Thong, the guard, *shouldered* a basket of something every night during the shooting season.

“ Another cause of offence was that the squire's lady had imported a French maid, who was said to be a petticoat spy of Bonaparte's, though in reality she was the daughter of one of the poor *émigrés*; she was French, however, and that, in those days, was enough; for every thing French was detested, except French brandy, and that was only tolerated because there was a difficulty in obtaining it.

“ It was fully determined that the squire had ‘lost the confidence of his constituents,’ and, of course, should lose ‘his seat.’ Meetings were held by both parties—the Whigs, who had secretly fomented the anger of the town against its representative, entertained sanguine hopes, that as a Tory was to ‘go out,’ a Whig must, of course, ‘come in.’ The corporation, who were all Tories, were determined to turn the squire out—but to have another Church-and-King-man in his stead. The only question was, *who* should be the man; and a very difficult question it was, if one may judge by the large quantity of port wine that was drunk, and the number of dinners that were eaten, before a satisfactory answer could be obtained to it.

“ The names of the leading men of the day were conned over; but every one of them was provided with a borough through private interest, and they all lived too far off to induce them to spend much money in Oldeton. The names of the country gentlemen around—their property, talents, virtues, and vices, were canvassed; but one was too poor and extravagant, another too rich and stingy, this was too stupid, and that too clever; in short, some valid objection was raised against every one of them. What was to be done?

“ The mayor consulted the town-clerk, but that functionary could not advise the mayor. More port wine, more dinners—but the knot of the difficulty remained untied, until one night one of the burgesses got rather fuddled, and in a long, snuffling, stammering speech, suggested that they should send one of their own townsmen to represent them.

“ A new idea, when they happen to meet with one, strikes most people; and the corporation of Oldeton, unused to such a piece of luck, were delighted beyond measure, and reeled home to their respective dwellings, filled with joy and port wine.

“ Another difficulty arose the moment the old one was overcome. *Who* should be the man—was still the question.

“ ‘Bungs, the Brewer,’ suggested one.

“ ‘Too heady and frothy,’ objected another.

“ ‘Pits, the tanner.’

“ ‘Too much bark about him—thinks more of skins and hides, than politics and poor-rates.’ ”

“ The names of Skewer the butcher, Short-weight the baker, Poisonem the apothecary, and Grindem the great miller, were as unceremoniously rejected. ”

“ At last, the same inebriated individual who had cut the former Gordian knot, ‘*nodus tali vindice dignus*,’ strongly hiccupped forth the name of my respected and respectable grandfather, who was too much taken by surprise to have sense or wind enough to negative the motion which was carried *nem. con.* by acclamation. ”

“ The parliament died a natural death—for the parliaments in those days were not addicted to suicide—and by the help of the ten or eleven men ‘on the books,’ who were obliged to pay their ticks, or vote for their creditor, but wisely chose the latter alternative, my Grandpère was declared to be ‘duly elected,’ and never had an hour’s quiet afterwards. ”

“ The Whigs, of course, raised a great clamour at the degradation of being represented by a grocer, and all his mops, brooms, and other sweetmeats, were mercilessly thrown in the teeth of my worthy progenitor, who, thinking it would not sound very well when he went to ‘take the oaths and his seat,’ that the question ‘who is Job Smyth, the honourable member for Oldeton?’ should be answered by ‘only a grocer,’ resolved to put in execution a plan he had previously, but from other and higher motives, meditated. He opened a bank under the firm of Smyth and Co., though who the Co. were never appeared, and was announced in the list of M. P.’s as Job Smyth, Esq, banker. ”

“ I will not trouble you with much more of his history; but I must just mention why he was one of the *silent* members of the house. ”

“ He had often essayed to speak on the sugar duties, and had succeeded in ‘catching the eye of the speaker’ several times; but the moment he opened his mouth *vox faucibus hæsit*, which he construed his ‘tongue was glued to his palate,’ and he sat down again amid loud cries of hear! hear! Upon one occasion having imbibed rather more than usual, and seeing a ‘thin house,’ he rose after a gentleman who had presented a petition, and in a hesitating tone said, ”

“ ‘Mr. Spea—spea—ker, I wotes as how that ’ere petition lays on the counter.’ ”

“ And sat down perfectly satisfied with the impression he had made on the house, which was convulsively laughing and ‘holding both its sides.’ ”

“ He sat out that parliament, but the envy of his fellow-townsmen, who could not bear that one of themselves should be raised so much above the others, threw him out at the next election—he ”

having polled exactly the eleven men who were still 'on his books.'

" 'After pride cometh a fall,' and my grandfather fell very sick, and his 'sickness was unto death.' Then, and then only, was he forgiven by his brother burgesses for 'setting himself up so much above his station.'

" My father, finding the banking business more profitable and less dirty than the grocery trade, disposed of 'the stock and goodwill,' including the twelve painted dips, which dingle-dangled over the door, as criminals used to do in the hanging days at the Old Bailey, to intimate that the tallow trade was combined with importations from Jamaica and China, and adhered closely to the issue of dirty notes—rags, as Mr. Cobbett used to call them—and the discounting of bills, by which he realised enough to enable him to buy a country-house, and aspire to the hand of a reduced country gentleman's daughter. Then, of course, he was coined into a county magistrate, for which he was admirably fitted—never having read a law-book or an act of parliament in his life, and knowing about as much of judicial proceedings as pigs do of playing on pianofortes; still he knew as much as many of his brother magistrates, and a 'fellow feeling made them wondrous kind' towards him.

" When I was born, the family prænomen of Job was exchanged for that of my maternal grandfather, and I was christened Samuel. I was sent to the grammar-school of Oldeton (for grammar-schools were patronized by country gentlemen in those days (though now nothing but Eton will do for them), and obtained one of the scholarships at St. Peter's attached to the foundation.

" You know that my allowance was always liberal at college; indeed, so liberal, that, beyond the credit of the thing, I cared little about taking a degree, as it was always understood in the family arrangements, that I should 'be a gentleman;' which meant, that I should have nothing to do with trade—even in bank-notes.

" Now, though 400*l.* per annum is considered a handsome allowance in the University, especially for a scholar, who is supposed to be a needy person, and pays no room-rent nor tuition, receiving besides some 50*l.* per annum, still, there are facilities in Oxford for spending treble that sum. How much I spent annually I have not the least notion, as I never saw a bill until I was on the point of taking my degree and leaving Oxford. And when the bills did come in, like my grandfather's moist sugar, all of a lump, I merely looked at the sum total of each, and assured the tradesman that my governor would settle all as soon as I went down. As it was well known that my father was a rich man, I was thanked very heartily for my 'past favours,' and solicited very earnestly for 'further orders.'

" I felt quite as easy in my mind about the discharge of my *ticks*

as the tradesmen did, not doubting for a moment that every thing would be paid, though I might be severely rebuked for my extravagance. Moreover, I knew that my influence with my mother and sister, who could do what they pleased with my father, was sufficient to ensure the fulfilment of my wishes.

“When I parted from you at Birmingham, and was left to my own thoughts, I cannot deny that I felt sundry misgivings as to money and time wasted, and talents—such as they were—unimproved. I also experienced some awkwardness about the method of opening the subjects of my ticks to the governor. I determined, however, not to be in a hurry about the matter, but to wait until some of my creditors should apply for their money. With this arrangement in my mind, I swallowed my ‘saddened thoughts, and sundry glasses of Staffordshire ale with Tom Whipcord, who drove the Sovereign day-coach.

“Most coachmen are communicative, and, generally speaking, well supplied with local information. Tom certainly was one of the greatest gossips that ever lived, and made a point of *pumping* every individual who sat by his side on the box, and behind him on the roof. I was, of course, on intimate terms with him, as I rode up and down by his side every term, and ‘took the ribbons’ several stages; indeed, I had often worked his coach for him to give him a week’s holiday, while I was supposed by my fond parents to be studying at Oxford.

“‘Have you heard from the governor lately, Mr. Samivel?’ he inquired, just as the horses for the last stage were put to.

“‘Not very lately; but why do you ask?’

“‘Hum!’

“‘What do you mean by hum, Tom? nothing the matter, I hope?’

“‘Why, I don’t know; Bung the brewer come down with me last journey—had the box, and gave me a shilling—a regular screw, and intimated as much as someat was wrong with your governor.’

“‘Not stopped, I hope,’ said I, thinking more, I must confess, of my Oxford duns than of my father’s ailments.

“‘Oh no!—no signs of pulling up—the consarn’s all right—but Bung said as how he was a little queer in the head—got the megrims, I suppose, like Brown Bess, as fell going down Skidneed Hill. I can tell you how to cure ‘em: cut a stick to a pint, and run it into his palate about the fourth rudge, and he’ll bleed plentiful, and run as well as ever. Bess did, at any rate.’

“When Tom had kindly furnished me with this remedy he changed the subject; but I was too much alarmed to be entertained by his conversation, and was glad when I got to the end of my journey—that is, by coach.

“I knew it would be useless to go to the bank, as it would

be closed, so I threw myself into a chaise and told the boy to drive as fast as he could to Longcroft's, as our country-house was called.

"I was kindly received by my mother and sister, and found that my fears about my father's health were but too well grounded.

"He had speculated largely and successfully in some foreign bonds, by the advice of his agents in London, and, stimulated by the hope of adding largely to his ample fortune, determined to extend his speculations. As his agents endeavoured to deter him from entering into several wild, ill-concerted schemes, he ceased to consult them, and, acting entirely upon his own knowledge of business—which was limited to country-banking—got 'his fingers burnt,' as the phrase is, to the tune of 20,000*l.* This a little chilled his ardour; but some designing men, by holding out promises of very large and quick returns, induced him to risk 10,000*l.* more in some 'safe investment of capital,' which proved very unsafe, and the 10,000*l.* shared the fate of the preceding 20,000*l.*

"These losses produced in his mind great excitement and irritability, which were increased by a letter from his former agents, declining his future favours, and begging him to transfer his account to some other house.

"This was no easy matter, as the news of his losses and his zeal for speculation were noised about in the money-market, and it was not until he had fully satisfied his former agents of his solvency, and promised them not to engage in any further schemes without their approbation, that they consented to re-open an account with him, and to supply him with means of meeting the *run* which would be sure to be made upon him in the country. His mind, like a bow which has been strained too violently, did not recover its wonted elasticity, and the excitement under which he had suffered was succeeded, as usual, by a want of energy and lowness of spirits, which totally incapacitated him for business; indeed, the family physician strongly urged him to retire at once, as he had realized sufficient to rank with the richest men in the county. But this advice he rejected as firmly as he did the suggestion that I should be sent for from Oxford, and, under the supervision of his old and faithful clerk Fidel, be installed at his desk, as his successor and junior partner. 'He had determined to make a gentleman of me, and I should never degrade myself by presiding at a counter, or scribbling my name upon dirty one-pound notes.'

"He consented, however, to absent himself from the bank for a time, and to place an additional clerk upon the establishment, though it was found necessary to put him under *surveillance*, as he had once or twice attempted to break through this necessary arrangement.

"There lived in Oldeton, next to our banking-house, a surgeon's widow, who had an only son named Owen Kington. He was

about my own age, and went to the grammar-school at the same time I did. Although we were in the same class, and joined in the same games, got into the same scrapes, and shared the same punishments, we were never intimate—or, what is called by schoolboys, friends or cronies. There was something so sly and underhanded about him, that I never could like him—he was emphatically a *sneak*. One fact will give you a better insight into his character than any description I could give of him.

“The 5th of November was always a memorable day in the free-school of Oldeton. We had a choice of a whole holiday to go where we pleased, or a grand display of fireworks, and a bonfire in the evening; the purchase money being made up by a subscription amongst ourselves, to which the masters gave a liberal addition. I need hardly say that our choice was invariably in favour of the fireworks, though a ‘flare up’ was not a flash word in those days.

“We had subscribed, and made up, on one of these occasions, a sum of nearly 10*l.*, which was given to the captain of the school, who usually ordered and paid for the combustibles. I was with him when he counted the money, which was all in silver, excepting three guineas, which had been given us by the mayor and our two masters. I saw him lock it up carefully in the upper part of his bureau just before we went to bed on the night of the 4th. On the following morning we were sent for to the master’s study, where the fireworks, which had just arrived, were deposited for safety until the evening. The man who had furnished them was waiting to be paid. Trueman, the senior boy, after seeing that the order had been properly executed, ran across to the school-room to obtain the money, and returned in a few minutes as pale as death to say that the money was gone.

“Dr. Bright, the head master, paid the tradesman, and dismissed him. We were then rung into school, and with closed doors a strict inquiry was set on foot as to who the thief could be. Trueman proved by me, that he had locked our money up safely the last thing the night before; and by another boy, that he had not been near his bureau that morning. The lock was found uninjured, and it was clear that no force had been applied to undo it. All our keys were examined, but none were found at all resembling Trueman’s. Every boy who was old enough to understand the nature of an oath swore that he did not take the money, nor had the least knowledge of the person by whom it was taken. Every method, indeed, was resorted to to detect the guilty person, but without success. The servants had not been in the school-room, which was a building detached from the masters’ houses, at all that morning.

“About a week after the money was missed, a little fellow named Trent was observed to spend a great deal more than his allowance on cakes and tarts. Upon inquiry, it was found he had

laid out fourteen shillings, for the possession of which he could not, or would not, account. He was, therefore, sent away from school with his character ruined for life.

"I cannot tell why, but I had my suspicions that the right thief was not detected. There was something in Owen Kington's manner that I could not make out. He was amongst the most zealous of those who sought to detect the criminal; and his joy at little Trent's dismissal, and the cessation of all further investigation, was so great, as to give rise to some very strong doubts in my mind whether he had not had some hand in the business himself.

"I watched him closely, but could find nothing to confirm my suspicions. He spent a great deal of money, but not more than usual, as his mother supplied him far too liberally.

"The year ended, and Trueman was elected off to college. I succeeded to the captaincy, and to the possession of *the* bureau.

"One day Mrs. Kington invited the sixth form boys to supper after a cricket-match on the common. We went into Owen's room to wash our hands, and as I was examining some books and toys in the closet, I found at the back a piece of hard soap, with the deep impression of a key upon it. Without saying any thing about it, I put it into my pocket, and when I was alone, found that it corresponded exactly with the wards of the key of the bureau, now my property, whence the money had been stolen.

"On the following morning I went to Dr. Bright, and, showing him the mould, told him of my suspicions. He sent me to the blacksmith who did our little jobs for us, and the moment he saw the mould and key, he said that he had made one of that pattern about twelve months before, for Mrs. Kington's gardener, who told him it was for a duplicate key of the green-house. The gardener, on being questioned privately by the doctor, confessed that Owen had given him a guinea to get it done for him, pretending it was for the boarders to let themselves out into the town with after it was dark. Owen, on being summoned into the study, saw the soap and the key, and in the most abject and contemptible manner threw himself on his knees and confessed the facts—that he had stolen the money early in the morning of the 5th, before any of the other boys had come into school; but before he had closed the bureau, and while he was in the act of putting the money into his pockets, little Trent had come in. To ensure his silence, he gave him fourteen shillings, and told him that, as he had received part of the stolen money, if it was ever discovered, he would certainly be hanged as a receiver. This the poor little fellow believed.

"Dr. Bright, wisely considering that the character of his school would be risked if so heartless and disgraceful a circumstance became, as it must have done had it been known, a subject of public comment, and feeling for his widowed mother, whose stock of hap-

piness was vested in her worthless son, resolved to remove Owen without assigning any reason for his dismissal.

“He wrote to poor little Trent’s parents, and expressed his pleasure at being able to remove from their breasts the painful sense they must have felt of their son’s depravity. Gratifying as the establishment of his innocence was to his father and mother, it came too late for the poor boy to derive any benefit from it. In the heat of his displeasure, and without deigning to hear his explanations, his father sent him for a sailor, and ere a week had passed, he and his sorrows were buried in the ‘deep, deep sea!’ whether by accident or design, no one could tell.

“Deep and severe was the affliction which the discovery of Owen’s villany caused to his mother. By the doctor’s advice, he was sent to a distant town, and placed in the surgery of a friend of her former husband.

“Though I had not seen him since, I had heard very bad accounts of him; and his conduct was such, while he was in London for the purpose of ‘walking the hospitals,’ as it is called, that it was found necessary to give up all idea of his following his father’s profession. He returned home, and was idling about, doing nothing but riding and horse-dealing, and mixing with the lowest characters of that low and dishonest profession.

“I have mentioned these facts in order to give you a notion of the disgust I felt when Mr. Fidel, our old clerk, with whom I was a great pet, told me, in addition to the circumstances in which my father was placed—for my mother and sister were too much hurt to give me the information I required—that it was confidently rumoured that this very Owen Kington was paying his addresses to my sister Alethæa, and that my parents had consented to their union, on condition that the scoundrel settled down steadily to business in the bank for twelve months.

“My mother and sister, very easy people in their way, and quite unconscious of any thing that was going on in the world, knew nothing whatever of Owen’s character. During the illness of my father, he had presumed upon his old acquaintance with them, and visited them daily. To give the brute his due, he was very handsome, of pleasing manners and address; and what won my sister most, a good musician. He accompanied her pianoforte with his flute; and as he was the only young man with whom she was on terms of intimacy, it is not to be wondered at that her simplicity made her think him a being of superior order.

“Their mothers, too, who had been warm friends for many years, were fools enough to think, and, as mothers often do, say, that they ‘were evidently born for each other.’ My temper was sorely tried on my first interview with Kington. I hated him, and I knew our hatred was mutual. I found that he had usurped the place



in the family that I had been used to occupy, ordering the servants about as though he were already their master. He assumed such an appearance of swagger and hauteur on my entrance, to overawe me, I suppose, into a certain degree of fear, if not of respect for him, that I was strongly tempted to knock him down. Nothing but old Fidel's earnest entreaties, that I would keep my anger 'below par,' and a conviction that I could only thwart the designs I suspected he was meditating, by steady and calm watchfulness and caution, enabled me to subdue my exasperated feelings. I did so—though it nearly choked me.

"With the permission of his medical attendant, I had an interview with my poor father on the morning after my arrival. I was astonished and shocked to see the alteration a few months had made in his appearance. It was not that his body was much attenuated, which struck me most, but that from a fine, cheerful, middle-aged man, he had suddenly become what the Grecian dramatist terms a *γερὸν ἄνθρωπον*, an old man on the brink of the grave. His hair was changed from black to white—not grey; the lines of his face which, when I last saw him, were scarcely traceable, were now converted into deeply-chiselled wrinkles; the form, too, of his face was altered—every feature being sharpened; the expression of his eyes was most painful, conveying the idea of a melancholy too deeply seated ever to be removed.

"He did not appear to know me; indeed, he merely raised his eyes, as I closed the door, and then dropped them again upon a book, which he seemed to be perusing attentively, but which I found was turned upside down.

"'Father,' said I, as soon as my tears would allow me to articulate, 'father, do you not know me? will you not welcome me home?' He gazed on me for a few seconds, sprung from his chair, and, seizing both my hands, held me at a distance from him.

"'Father,' said I again in agony, 'do you not know me? me, your son? your only son!'

"He seemed to recognize my voice for a moment, and his eyes gleamed with pleasure, but only for a moment, for, loosing my hands, he fell back in his chair, and said, in a voice so feeble as to be scarcely audible, 'No, it's not Owen, not Owen, where can Owen be?'

"'Owen, sir,' I replied, annoyed beyond measure at finding that the man whom I detested occupied the place in his feeble mind that I ought to have filled,—'Owen, sir, is with my sister Alethæa.'

"'Alethæa? ay, ay, yes—I know—they'll be married—but not yet—not yet.'

"'I, sir, am just returned from Oxford,' I remarked, wishing to lead him into a train of thought which might enable him to recognize me.

“ ‘Oxford? ay, Oxford—my poor boy is at Oxford—I’ve been ill—very ill—but he has never been to see me—but Owen has—where *can* Owen be?’

“ ‘That villain—said I to myself, but speaking aloud—seems to engross all his thoughts, and I to have no share in—

“ ‘*Share—share,*’ he cried, springing from his seat, his eyes assuming an appearance of intense interest; ‘share—in what concern? Who are the directors? How much per cent will it pay? What’s the deposit money? I’m quite ready to embark in any safe speculation, sir; but I have a scheme of my own, sir, a scheme that *must* pay; but before I enter into particulars—what house do you represent, sir? I must not have men of straw, sir—but men of capital—you’re a man of capital, I’ve no doubt—I’ll disclose my plan to you, sir, but in confidence—if it gets abroad, sir, we shall be forestalled.’

“ ‘He seized me by the collar, led me up to a window, and, pulling out a pocket-book, held the pencil in his hand, as if preparing to write. He then looked round suspiciously, as if to see that no one was near to overhear him, and whispered.

“ ‘I mean to form a joint stock-company, sir, I call it the Incorporated Society for the importation of Savoyard boys, hand-organs, white mice, monkeys, and marmots. It *must* pay, sir—a little boy told me he paid 5*s.* per diem for the hire of white mice—all the Jews deal in them, and make large fortunes. Here, sir, is the list of directors,’ pointing to a list of the lords and commons, in his book, ‘all men of capital, sir—capital men; 50,000 shares, at 5*s.* each. How many shall I say for you?’

“ ‘I was too much shocked to speak. Seeing me hesitate, he became very violent, and stamped so loudly on the floor with his feet, as he exclaimed, in tones getting gradually higher, ‘It *must* pay, sir, it *must* pay,’ that the attendant, under whose surveillance he was placed, came in from the adjoining room, and requested me to withdraw immediately.

“ ‘It seemed that he was perfectly quiet and tractable, as long as no allusion to business was made; but the moment the least hint was given about money matters, or speculations of any kind, he became very violent. The fit, however, seldom lasted long, and was succeeded by increased melancholy and despondency.

“ ‘By the physician’s advice, I visited him daily, but without attempting to converse with him, unless he addressed me. He recognized me after a few days, and to my great joy, the ‘Owen—where is Owen—where *can* Owen be?’ was exchanged for ‘My poor boy—where is my dear boy?’ He would sometimes lay his head on my shoulder, and sob like an infant, stroking my hair as he used to do in my childhood.

“ ‘I remained at home for six months, during which period Owen

wes so attentive to the business of the bank, and showed so much talent and zeal, that Fidel ceased to regret that I had not listened to the suggestions of my father's agents and become a partner in the concern. He visited us daily, or rather my mother and sister, for I generally absented myself during his stay—we could not meet without shewing our mutual feelings of hatred and abhorrence, and, as I saw it pained my sister, I thought it best to meet him as seldom as possible.

At the end of six months, my family yielded to his earnest entreaties that his period of probation should be shortened, and my sister consented to become his wife at once. An arrangement was made by which he was appointed junior partner, with one-third of the profits, and had powers of attorney, I believe they call them, to act in my father's name. I did not choose to be present at the wedding, and act the hypocrite by feigning a joy I did not feel at my sister's union. I learned from the physician that my father was likely to remain in the same unhappy state for some time, and, though I left with reluctance, I set out upon a tour through Scotland.

“At my mother's suggestion, my annual allowance was doubled, and I sent up to Oxford to resign my scholarship, as I was preventing some boy, who might really want it, from obtaining 50*l.* per annum, to assist him in going through the university.

“I have had cause to regret this step ever since ; but at that time I felt fully justified in taking it.

“I will not detail to you my adventures in Scotland—they consisted chiefly in fishing, shooting, and loch-ing, or lake-ing. The hospitality of the Highlands was proverbial in those days, before steam conveyed such myriads of people to prey like locusts on the land of cakes. I was entertained at one mansion until I was tired of it, and then transferred to another, with a direction like a coach parcel, ‘to be taken great care of.’

“I received several letters from my sister, who expressed herself quite satisfied with the object of her choice, and intimated a hope that her husband's attention to the interests of the family, the respect he showed to my father and mother, and the love he entertained for herself, would induce me to look upon him with more friendly eyes than I had hitherto done.

“I had been in Scotland nearly six months, and intended visiting the Hebrides, but gave up all idea of it on receiving a letter from Fidel, that caused me great uneasiness. He told me, under the strictest charge of secrecy, that he was not satisfied with Mr. King-ton's proceedings, as many deeds and papers had been taken from the safe, which were deposited there as securities. He wished me to return, as he had no one to consult with on so important a matter. My father was more violent than ever upon the slightest allusion to business.

"I took my passage to London in a Leith smack, and, on the morning after my arrival in town, went into the city, intending to call at our agent's. The principal partner, for whom I inquired, and to whom alone I was personally known, was out, and would not be at home until two o'clock. To beguile the time, I walked into one of the numerous eating houses that surround Lombard Street, and, calling for a chop and the morning paper, sat down in one of the boxes. These boxes, as they are called, because, I suppose, they are used for *packing* people in as closely as possible, are separated from each other by wooden partitions, on the top of which are dingy red or green stuff curtains, hung on dingier brass rods, to prevent any but your own party seeing you eat and drink.

"The waiter entered with a dirty napkin under one arm, and a dirty *Times* under the other; two round plates, with two very dirty round tin covers in his right hand, and a pewter cup with porter in it in his left.

" '*Times*, sir?'

" 'Yes.'

" 'Chop, sir?'

" 'Yes.'

" 'One chop, sixpence; one vegetable, penny; one bread, penny; half-pint stout, three half-pence—nine and a half, sir.'

"I paid him, and gave him the change out of the shilling for himself, for which unusual bit of generosity, being three halfpence over his usual fee, I received a very humble salaam, with an assurance that I should 'have the *Morning Chron.* as soon as gentleman in green specs had done with it.'

"While I was endeavouring to masticate the bit of sole-leather, that was miscalled a mutton-chop, and reading a paragraph or two between the heats, some persons entered the box immediately behind mine, and, as I could find by the shaking of the partition, seated themselves on the bench next to me.

"The waiter approached them with his usual 'Chop, sir? Steak, sir? Prime cut just now.' A strange voice answered, 'No, not at present; bring some paper, and pen and ink.'—'Yes sir.'

"An earnest conversation was commenced as soon as the writing materials were brought, of which nothing reached me but the whizzing and burring sounds that attend upon whispers. Not wishing to be an eavesdropper, I gave several loud imitations of a cough, and knocked my elbow against the wooden partition, to let them know that somebody was in the next box.

"I went on with my paper, and thought no more of my neighbours until I heard the words 'It *must* be done, sir, and immediately. The stock *must* all be sold out, and the money for the mortgages advanced at once'—in a voice I could not mistake.

" 'Listen, listen to the voice of love,' is an exhortation almost

needless. I listened, and attentively; to the voice of *hatred*—for the speaker was Owen Kington.

“The strange voice inquired, ‘But will it not cause surprise, if not suspicion, that the estate of Longcrofts should be mortgaged? the selling out of so much stock, too, at once, will excite public attention.’

“‘It *must* be done, sir, we have need of the money for a very advantageous investment,’ replied Owen, ‘and the stock is in different names. If you cannot, or will not do it, I must apply elsewhere.’

“The waiter was paid, and Owen and his friend left the room. Though I had no doubt whatever of his identity, from the peculiar tones of his voice, I watched him out of the box, in the little dingy looking-glass that was over the fireplace, and under the eight-day clock.

“At the appointed hour I returned to our agent’s and found him within. I drew for a small sum, as an excuse for my visit; and, upon inquiring if Mr. Kington was likely to be in town, was told that a letter had been received from him that morning, stating that he should not be in London for some weeks.”

When the Bursar arrived at this point of his tale, in a voice somewhat husky and dry, though he had oiled it at intervals with old port, a most inharmonious and prolonged yaw-aw-awh! from the vice-principal, accompanied by the stretching out of his legs to their full length under the mahogany, and his arms above it, to the endangerment of the senior tutor’s nose, caused him to close the MS., and say :—

“That’s what I call a broad hint, Peter!”

“Yaw-aw-awh. Yes, sir,” cried I, gaping too.

“A glass of cold brandy-and-water!—yaw-aw-awh! and light my lamp.”

“Another for me, Peter, yaw-aw-awh!” said the tutor. “Bursar, here’s your very good health, and thanks for your—yaw-aw-awh! You must finish it another night.” *Exeunt omnes.*

## CHAPTER VII.

SAM SMYTH’S MS.—*continued.*

“DINE with me to-day quietly in my rooms,” said the Bursar to our dean and the senior tutor, “and I will, if you feel interested in it go on with the MS. of poor Sam.”

"But why not dine in hall," inquired the dean, "and then read it in the common room over our wine?"

"Simply, because I know there will be two or three *skids* there."

"Skids!" exclaimed the tutor; "what sort of animals may they be?"

"You know what a skid really is, I suppose?"

The tutor, a very clever man, had never met with the word, and acknowledged his ignorance—which college-tutors very seldom have any occasion to do.

"A skid is a sort of iron shoe attached to a chain, and placed under the hind-wheel of a carriage to retard its progress when going down hill."

"Ay," said the dean, in his solemn and sonorous tones, "this retardation of the rotundities of wheeled vehicles is technically designated by Black Will—*nigerrimus Gulielmus*, as the undergraduates call him—'*dragging a hill*.'"

"Quite right," said the Bursar; "that is a physical skid. A metaphysical skid is an animal very often met with in common rooms and country gentlemen's houses, and not unfrequently in 'another place;' a man who acts as a drag on the wheels of society; a 'patent retarder' of conversation and rational enjoyment; a bottle-stopper, and joke-hater—who casts a gloom over a party, and checks every attempt to 'drive dull care away;' a fellow who smothers the least spark of wit; a *wet blanket* to quench the flames of mirth: in short, a man that makes you fancy that your wine is 'corked,' the candles burn dimly, and the evening as endless as a journey in the old Bath invalid coach."

The dean and tutor acknowledged that they had often met men to whom, although they were very slow coaches, they had been ready to call out "Pull up, and take the skid off!"

"Peter! Dinner for three in my rooms. Spitchcocked eels, a saddle of mutton, and a dish of snipes."

"Pastry, sir?"

"No, Peter; brown sugar, bean-flour, and rancid lard, though profitable to the cook, are a *rudis indigestaque moles* to the Bursar. You may order a dish of maccaroni or a fondue."

Now our cook was celebrated for what he called *fundoh* cheese. In reply to my question what *fundoh* cheese meant, he told me:—

"Why, you see, Mr. Priggins, I takes and grates this here Parmesan into this here *fundoh* (pointing to a shallow copper stewpan), and then I *fundohs* it over a fire, and that makes *fundoh* cheese."

The world have a mistaken notion that Oxford is celebrated for its cookery. I wish they would try what Dusterly calls "our ashed calve's ead," which strongly resembles a decayed sheepskin boiled to rags in a gallon of liquid glue!

Upon this occasion, Coquus unfortunately failed; the eel was

overdone, the mutton underdone, the snipes were too high, and the fundoh, like a Hindoo widow, was "burnt to death." I say unfortunately, because gentlemen who are worked so hard as college-officers are deserve some comforts as a reward for their labours.

On that very morning the dean had read prayers—in Latin, too. The tutor had given two lectures, and pointed out the exact situation of an "Island in the Ægean;" and the Bursar had given a receipt for 30*l.* caution-money; and it was very hard their dinner should have been spoilt, when such hard labour had given them an appetite.

"Peter," said our Bursar, "take away these execrable eatables, or rather uneatables, and tell the cook I'll sconce him as sure as he is alive; then bring me a bottle of the oldest port out of the furthestmost bin in my private cellar."

"What, the proctor, sir?"

"Yes. You may as well bring up three—a little warmth will not hurt it."

Now, this wine, which was of a celebrated vintage, and peculiar character—"primeer kollitay," as Dusterly called it—obtained its name from having been paid for out of the salary which our Bursar received when he was proctor—at least out of what remained of it, after purchasing a new gown with velvet sleeves, and paying for the supper which is annually given by that officer to the University-barbers—the Tonsores.

I brought up one bottle as carefully as I could, holding it horizontally, and taking pains to keep the chalked side uppermost—for which I got unexpectedly rebuked.

"Peter, you are getting old and stupid. How *can* you be such an idiot as to bring a bottle of port up in that way? causing the wine to wobble about like the liquid in a spirit-level, and washing off the crust. Mind, sir, in future, and when you have drawn the bottle from the bin, turn it up slowly, and keep it perpendicularly; it may appear to you to be contrary to the general practice, but it's a plan of my own, sir, the result of deep and painful thought, and the experience of years has confirmed the correctness of it. Now, sir, decant it slowly, and without frothing it, and then give me the MS."

"Let me see," said he, when I had given him the papers, and he had done smacking his lips after the first glass, "where did I leave off?"

"I think," replied the tutor, "Sam had just ascertained that Owen Kington was in London selling stock and mortgaging estates, without the knowledge of the agent."

"Yes," said the dean, "I was rather sleepy at the time; but I

do recollect something about Sam's having a cheap and dirty chop somewhere in the east."

The Bursar found the place, took one bumper to church and king, and thus continued Sam Smyth's adventures :

"You will readily conceive that Owen's proceedings gave rise to many painful suspicions, and caused me much uneasiness. I determined to go down to Staffordshire and see old Fidel as soon as possible. The Oldeton mail was 'booked full,' but I got a place on a night-coach which passed within ten miles of the town.

"I sent a porter for my luggage, and dined in the city at the inn whence the coach was to start. Every thing was clean and neat, and the wine appeared to be good, but I could not relish it; it seemed to taste flat, and to have lost its exhilarating qualities.

"I drank more than my usual allowance, but I could not 'cheer the cockles of my heart,' or remove the gloomy fancies with which I was haunted. I tried to while away the time by reading the evening papers, but found that when I had read the leading article through, I knew nothing of the subject matter of it, and had not benefited by the malignant abuse it had lavished on some cotemporary journal which presumed to differ from it on some political point. I thought that eight o'clock never would arrive; it did at last, however, and with it the Boots to say that the coach was ready.

"I had secured the box-seat in order to have a chat with the coachman, and avoid the conversation of the Brummagem tradesmen, that would most likely be on the roof. We had a very heavy load on the top, and the hind and fore boots were crammed with baskets of fish. The coachman I fancied was drunk when we started, and my suspicions were confirmed before we got to the 'Peacock' at Islington, where he pulled up and had a tumbler of hot rum-and-water. At the 'Mother Redeap,' at the foot of Highgate Hill, he had another, and at the gate-house, where he stopped to breathe his horses, after climbing the hill, a third. I told him I was afraid he would overdo it, and run us into danger; to which he replied, by telling me to 'go to——and mind my own business.' In going down the hill towards Finchley, he did not lock the wheel; the consequence was that the wheel-horses could not hold back against the heavy weight, and, after floundering a few yards on their haunches, fell, and the coach was upset.

"When I recovered from a state of insensibility, which had lasted three or four hours, I found myself lying on a bed, in a small room, with four or five persons around me. One of them was binding up my arm, from which the surgeon had taken a pound or two of blood, as I judged from the contents of a basin, which stood on the bed. He was employed in tying one of my legs firmly between two deal boards with long strips of calico. I was



told that I—or rather the coachman—had broken it below the knee, and that it was a ‘compound fracture,’ and would probably confine me to my bed for some weeks. This was certainly very pleasant intelligence to a man who had every reason to suspect that the interests of himself and family required his immediate presence two hundred miles off.

“I begged of the surgeon to write a letter for me to my mother, and tell her of my painful situation, and to old Fidel to urge him to come to me as soon as he possibly could.

“Whether it was the severity of the accident, and the shock which the system had received, or anxiety of mind, I cannot say—most likely the latter—but I was so ill for a week, that I knew nothing that passed. When I recovered, my first inquiry was if Mr. Fidel had arrived, or any letters had been received. There were two, one from my mother, expressing her regret that she could not come up and nurse me, as my father was too ill to be left, and had taken a fancy to keep her by his side day and night.

“My sister Alethæa was in an ‘interesting situation,’ and unable to travel so far. She begged of me to have the best advice, and to return home as soon as the surgeon would allow me to move. She made no allusion to Owen Kington’s coming up to me, as she rightly thought that if any thing would throw me into a fever, it would be his hated presence. Mr. Fidel’s letter was like himself, very neat and clean, and very short. He expressed his regret at not being able to wait upon me in consequence of the absence of Mr. Kington, who was gone to Edinburgh on business.

“Now I was most anxious to write to Fidel to tell him of my having seen Owen in London, and of my suspicions of his having formed some underhanded plan of enriching himself at the expense of my father, but the surgeon would not allow me to do so. Indeed, if he had permitted me, I do not think I could have managed it; for I was so weak, that when I attempted to sit up in bed I was seized with a sensation of giddiness, that made me fancy all the chairs and tables were dancing about the room, and the posts of my bed running round after each other. I got my surgeon to write to Oxford, and order James Jobs to come up to me if he was out of place. Luckily for me he was so, and was at my bedside the following evening, looking very lean and hungry. The poor fellow had been earning a few shillings a-week, by cleaning the men’s boots, and keeping dogs for them; but the trade was so bad that the dogs were fed much better than himself.

“At the end of a month, I was allowed to leave my bed for a sofa, and was assured by my surgeon that in a fortnight’s time I should be able to travel home by easy stages. I did not write to Fidel, as I had had several letters from my mother, in which no allusion was made to any thing going wrong at the bank. I sent Jobs

to the agents to get a check cashed, and to inquire if they had heard of or seen Mr. Kington lately. He returned with the money and a message, that except on business transactions they had not heard of or seen any one from Oldeton since I had called on them.

"The last day of the tedious fortnight at length arrived. I invited my surgeon to dine with me, and after making him a very polite speech for his kindness and attention to me, gave him a check for fifty guineas. After paying my bill for board and lodging, to the obliging hostess of 'The Wrestlers,' and rewarding her servants, I found it necessary to draw some more money for my travelling expenses. I wrote a check, and on the following morning despatched Jobs to the agent's with it. He returned, as pale as death, with the agreeable news that there were 'no effects,' and a message from the senior partner, that he would see me in the course of the day. I sent for my surgeon and told him his check was valueless, and that I feared it would be out of my power to recompense him for his services at present. He was a gentleman, fortunately, and not only expressed himself perfectly willing to wait until it was quite convenient for me to discharge his bill, but offered to supply me with money sufficient to carry me home. This kind offer I declined until I had had an interview with the agent.

"I passed the day, as you may imagine, in a state of great anxiety, which was not alleviated by the sorrowful face of James Jobs, who seemed so completely weighed down by his fears that I was utterly ruined, as to be unable to do any thing but sigh and cry alternately.

"About six o'clock in the evening our agent arrived, and with him old Fidel, who for a time acted like a maniac. He shook me by the hand, laughed heartily, and then burst out crying. Then he laughed and cried at the same time, like a lady in hysterics. He sat down for two minutes, then jumped off his chair, and danced about the room, upsetting several articles of furniture. I made signs to James Jobs to lead him out of the room; but he resisted, saying, 'Leave me alone—leave me alone, I shall be well soon.'

"When he had recovered, he told me, in a strange, rambling, incoherent manner, a tale that I will endeavour to recount as concisely as I can :

"Owen Kington, during an absence of nearly a month, in which Fidel had received three or four letters from him, dated, and bearing the postmark, Edinburgh, had managed, by means of the powers of attorney with which he had been furnished, to sell out all the stock, turn the securities of the firm into cash, and mortgage all the estates for nearly their full value. The discovery had taken place in consequence of the agents' account having been overdrawn, and their writing to Fidel for an explanation and remittances. The safe, which was in an arched cellar under the bank, was locked, and the

keys could not be found. On forcing the fastenings, it was nearly empty—nothing of any value remained; the securities, title-deeds, bonds, with every thing convertible into money, were gone—in short, our ruin was complete.

“The agent advised me to return home, as my father was worse, and my mother forced to leave him to attend my poor sister, who had been confined prematurely, in consequence of the news of her husband’s villany having been thoughtlessly and suddenly conveyed to her. He offered me a loan of 100*l.*, but Fidel declared that he had saved himself a little fortune, by care and economy, out of his salary, and should be offended if I applied for, or accepted assistance from, any one but himself. I thanked the agent heartily for his kind consideration, and gratified old Fidel by expressing a determination of throwing myself entirely, for the present, on his guidance and generosity.

“On the following morning, with Fidel’s aid, I paid my surgeon’s bill, and set off in a carriage, which we hired, for what, alas! was no longer our home. We travelled by easy stages, and arrived at Longcroft on the fourth day. I found my sister and the child both dead, and my father in a state of mental torpor, and wasted to a skeleton. My mother was deeply grieved at the loss of her only daughter; for the loss of the money she cared but little—indeed, she seemed scarcely to think about it. Mrs. Kingston, the mother of the villain, that had brought all this misery on our heads, offered to share her annuity with us, and would willingly have done so, had she not found in a few days that her son had contrived to leave her penniless, by selling the annuity under pretence of obtaining a more advantageous investment of the principal.

“I will not dwell on this painful part of my tale. My father died in a few days; every thing was sold and divided among the creditors. My mother went to live with her brother, who went to Oxford and called my creditors together. He stated to them the unfortunate situation in which I was placed by circumstances over which I had had no control, and they kindly consented to accept a portion of their dues, and to release me from all further anxiety on their account.

“The sum required my uncle paid at once, though he could ill afford to do it, having but a small income, and a large *little* family.

“It is the fashion, you know, Bursar, to abuse the Oxford tradesmen—I mean those whose dealings are principally with the university, and to accuse them of making high charges and enormous profits; but I can safely say, from an examination of my bills, that, considering they had been running on for nearly five years, my creditors must have been *minus* if they had received the whole amount. I can also say, that I never knew an instance of a respectable tradesman’s acting harshly or oppressively to a young man, who was

willing, but unable to pay his bills. There are some scamps among them, of course, who impose on the inexperience of undergraduates, and for their roguery the honest, upright tradesman suffers.

“Old Fidel declined an offer of a clerkship, with a liberal salary, at the agent’s in London, and retired upon his little property which he had placed in the funds. I consented to share his cotlage and his means, until I could hit upon some way or other of providing for myself.

“How this was to be managed was a problem difficult of solution. For what was I suited? It was true that I was what may be termed a fair classical scholar. I could construe and parse most of the authors that are usually read at schools and college. I knew a smattering of Roman and Grecian history, and could find most of the places of ancient renown on the map. I could write a decent copy of verses, and compose a tolerable theme in Latin or English, and had a slight acquaintance with Euclid and Logic; of French I knew as little as four years’ teaching at a grammar-school generally ensures; but what did I know of law, physic, divinity, or any of the numerous branches of commerce? of any thing, in fact, which was commutable into bread, cheese, and beer, or their representative, money? I doubt very much if I could have done a rule-of-three sum, or reckoned the interest of any sum of money that had been left me as a legacy.

“Fidel urged me strongly to allow him to initiate me into the mysteries of book-keeping and accounts, in order to qualify me for the situation which he had rejected; but I had neither capabilities, taste, nor inclination for trade or business of any kind. A banker’s clerk—indeed any other clerk—gave me a vague notion of a pale-faced, lank-haired, effeminate dyspeptic, who was only allowed to escape from work—and that not wholesome, hard, bodily labour—to eat his food, for which he had no appetite, as fast as he could, in order to go to work again. I would ‘have none on’t.’

“As to the army and navy, I had no patronage, and the war was at an end. Besides, I had a cousin, a half-starved, half-pay (but the terms are synonymous) captain in a foot regiment, whose account of the miseries he endured, from the want of means to do as his wealthier brother-officers did, was quite enough to check any inclination I might have felt to parade myself in a dull country-town, and kick pebbles off a bridge for hours together for amusement, or be sent out to some healthy colony like Sierra Leone, to be manufactured into meat for jackals.

“There was but one profession left, for law and physic were out of the question; the former required five years’ servitude, and the latter seven; and at the end of that term, I might have had the satisfaction of engrossing deeds, as an attorney’s clerk, or pounding nastinesses as an apothecary’s assistant, at 40*l.* per annum, and

a glass of wine on Sundays. The bar and the gold-headed cane, without patronage, ensure a rapid state of starvation. 'Molley's your only wear': the black gown and white tie, and that 'wide field for exertion,' a narrow pulpit, in a country-church, were my only resources.

"I knew that by hard reading I could prepare myself for orders in ten or twelve months, but I did not like the idea of imposing upon Fidel the task of keeping me during that period.

"It struck me 'one fine day,' that I might earn something by my pen. In great trepidation, and a feeling of nervousness, I sat down, and with greater difficulty than I imagined was possible, wrote, in my best style, what I conceived was a very original and amusing historiette, and exactly suited to the readers of the—*Magazine*. I read it, with proper emphasis on the proper 'points,' to my old friend and protector, who was delighted with it, and fancied I was provided for for life.

"I was not 'taken in,' though I was done for; a 'Notice to Correspondents' told me plainly, but not politely, that I was 'an impostor, as the tale had appeared in three different magazines before, and been told with spirit and elegance—qualities in which my version of it were totally and unequivocally deficient.' I got something by it, however; the 'raw material' was left for me at 'the office,' and waste paper is always useful, particularly to a man who smokes.

All our inquiries as to the *locus in quo* of Owen Kington had hitherto proved fruitless. About a week after my failure in authorism, I received a letter from the agent, begging me to come up to London as soon as I could. As my leg, though still serving as a barometer, and giving me painful hints of every change of weather, was nearly well, I went up by the mail, and next morning was ushered into 'the parlour,' a small, dingy, dirty room, in which were a great many large boxes and iron-chests, and a table covered with ledgers, journals, cash-books, files, and other tools used in the trade of banking.

"Mr. Cashuppe, the senior partner, begged me to be seated on the only chair, besides his own leathern easy, that was in the room, and asked me if I thought I should know the man again whom I had seen in conversation with Owen at the chop-house in the city. As I had merely seen him in the looking-glass for a minute or two before they left the coffee-room, I had my doubts whether I should be able to recognise him, but I thought I should know his voice.

"Mr. Cashuppe gave me the *Times*, and told me to amuse myself with it until I should receive a signal from him—a rap at the door—to come to him in the front room.

"In less than half an hour the summons was given, and I saw a man talking to one of the clerks, in whom I fancied I recognized

Owen's friend. I walked up to his side, and his voice, which was a peculiar one, for he stammered slightly, almost convinced me that he was the man. My suspicions were fully confirmed when he used both his hands to replace his hat on his head, which he had laid on the counter during his colloquy with the clerk. I nodded to the agent, who left his desk, and requested Mr. Discount, as he called him, to walk into the parlour. I followed; and, at a hint from Mr. Cashuppe, placed myself near the door to cut off any attempt at an escape.

"You are acquainted with a man named Owen Kington, I believe, sir?" said the agent, in an interrogatory tone.

"Mr. Discount, who was what is termed on 'change a *shy cock*, turned first very pale, and then very red, and took time to answer 'that he had some knowledge of such a person.'

"You are aware, sir, that he has absconded with the whole of the property and moneys of the firm of Smyth and Co., bankers, Oldeton, Staffordshire, in which he was the junior partner?"

"No answer.

"You may recollect having been with him on a certain day, about three months since, in the coffee-room of Greasy's chop-house?"

"Still *vox faucibus hæsit*.

"If not, this gentleman, Mr. Smyth,' indicating that he meant me by pointing with his thumb 'over the left' shoulder, 'may be able to freshen your memory; for he saw you there, and overheard your conversation with Mr. Owen Kington.'

"Mr. Discount, who had been standing hitherto, sat down, and looked very earnestly at the hearthrug, on which he described a great many intricate geometrical designs with the point of his umbrella, but made no remark.

"Mr. Cashuppe opened the parlour-door, and whispered something to one of the clerks, in which the words 'officer,' 'immediately,' were spoken loud enough to reach the ear of the gentleman with a short memory. He sprung from his chair, and endeavoured to push by me and escape, for which piece of rudeness I was compelled to knock him down. He rose, shook his fist in my face, and the dust off his clothes, and resumed his chair, as Mr. Cashuppe locked the door and put the key into his pocket.

"After a silence of five minutes, he begged and entreated Mr. Cashuppe not to give him into custody, and he would disclose all the transactions that he had had with Owen. The officer, who had just arrived, was ordered to wait in the outer room, and Mr. Discount confessed that, through the instrumentality of himself and the children of Israel, Mr. Kington had 'realized,' at a great sacrifice, upon all the securities, bonds, and mortgages of my poor father, and gone to France, whence he had received a letter from

him about a week before, dated Havre-de-Grace. He allowed that he had been very well paid for his share in the transaction, and offered, if he should be indemnified from further trouble and expense, to accompany me or any one else to Havre, in search of his former employer; from whom, he doubtless knew, he should get nothing more to compensate him for the public exposure, if not more serious consequences of his villany.

"When the preliminaries were satisfactorily arranged, I received 50*l.* from Cashuppe, and posted with Mr. Discount to Southampton. We sailed by the first packet for Havre, where we arrived on the second day. The only benefit that I derived from the voyage was the ridding my stomach of a great deal of bile; for, on inquiring of Madame Strang, at the *Hôtel de Londres*, on the quay, we learned that the gentleman in a military surtout and a foraging cap, with large moustaches and bushy whiskers, who had stayed at her house for a week under the assumed name of Colonel Owen, had sailed for New York two days before, in 'the fast-sailing line-of-packets ship, General Washington, 800 tons burden, teak-built and copper-fastened;' a circumstance of which Mr. Discount was possibly aware, though he declared *upon his honour* he was not.

"After obtaining our *Vu pour l'Angleterre* by the agency of Madame Moussut, the feminine *Commissaire d'Hôtel*, we re-embarked on board the Southampton packet. The wind was blowing hard from the N. W., and we were very nearly wrecked on the back of the Isle of Wight. I was almost uncharitable enough to wish that the vessel which contained Owen and his ill-gotten wealth might founder in the gale. I thank God that I did not whisper the thought even to my own heart, for in less than a week the newspapers were filled with accounts of injuries done by the storm, and amongst them, 'the total wreck of the Washington, for New York, off the Scilly Isles, not a soul saved.'

"This news, which I conveyed as delicately as I could to Mrs. Kington, on my return to Oldeton, threw her into a serious illness, which, after a few weeks, proved fatal to her.

"I commenced reading so hard, that old Fidel had serious thoughts of throwing 'Tomline on the Thirty-nine Articles,' and 'Pearson on the Creed,' behind the fire, for fear I should injure my health by over-application. I, however, was too anxious to relieve him from the expense of maintaining me not to persevere, and declined all invitations to enter into society, though kindly pressed to do so by my former friends, to whom the *diffugiant cadis cum fœce siccatis amici* was not applicable.

"One day, as I was deeply engaged in a long dissertation upon the propriety of omitting or inserting a Greek article in a passage where its presence or absence did not interfere with the meaning of

the text, James Jobs entered. He was now head-waiter at 'The Lion,' a place I had obtained for him, to ensure his being near to me, and rendering me at his leisure those little services with which I found it difficult to dispense. He brought a county newspaper in his hand, and pointed to an advertisement which he said he thought might be worth my attention. It ran thus :

" 'WANTED.—An A. B. of Oxford or Cambridge, the former would be preferred, to take the classical chair in a seminary for young noblemen and gentlemen. Salary liberal. Accommodations comfortable. Apply to Dr. Doonuffin, Acorn House, near Lowborough.'

"As Lowborough was only twenty miles from Oldeton, I determined to go over and offer my services to 'take the chair,' though I had sundry misgivings as to my ability to fill it with propriety. I did not like the idea of being a *cane*, as ushers are called, in a 'boarding-school for young gentlemen,' and of sleeping in a double-barrelled bed, with a measly, rashy hooping-coughy, croopy, 'little dear;' but poverty must put up with strange bedfellows, and my present dependant state was unpleasant.

"I went over, on the coach, to Lowborough, and, on inquiring for Acorn House, was directed to a fine old mansion, about a mile from the town, which derived its name from an enormous representation of 'a specimen of the food of the aboriginal Britons,' which was fixed upon a pointed sort of buttress on the top of the parapet.

"I afterwards learned that the mansion, and the estate on which it stood, formerly belonged to an old family which, as old things are wont to be, was now nearly worn out. The last occupier had been ruined in contesting the county to oblige his party, and was living abroad to oblige his eldest son, for whom the estate was being 'nursed.'

"The house had been advertised again and again, but, as the land was let away from it to several farmers, no gentleman would take it, and as Dr. Doonuffin offered to keep it in repair until the heir came of age, and to pay the taxes, he was permitted to live in it rent-free. The furniture and pictures, with the exception of the family likenesses, which still graced the gallery, had been disposed of by public auction.

"The park in which the house stood had been well wooded and stocked with deer, but the trees had vanished, as the landlord had been forced to 'cut his sticks' to pay his electioneering bills; and in the room of the bucks and does, whose carcasses had been sold to fill the 'fair round bellies' of aldermen, and the skins to be made up into Woodstock gloves, several flocks of muttons were seen nibbling the very heart out of the short sweet grass.

"Dr. Doonuffin, whose history I afterwards learnt from his own lips, had been a linendraper in London, but, being more strongly



attached to his wist-club and his women than his business and his wife, had been twice a bankrupt. The first time he paid nine-pence in the pound, and started again with 'great credit' to himself, and actually kept on for four months; but, as he could not meet the bills which then became due, he was again in the *Gazette*, and paid three farthings in the pound. He would, as he said, have 'tried it on' a third time, but no one would give him credit for a skein of silk. His gay friends at the club—which was called 'The Bucks,'—would not patronize a man who had no money to lose, and he would have been starved, had not the person who took to his business given him a place as shopman. Unfortunately there was a till in the shop-counter, out of which several silver coins had been missed, and as he was supposed to know the method of unlocking the till better than any one else in the place, he was recommended to look out for another situation. He did 'keep a good look out,' and got a board, announcing cheap clothes, which he carried about on a long pole, at one shilling a day. If this did not give him much food, it gave him plenty of time for observation; and, in one of his walks across Tower Hill, he saw a crowd collected round a man, who was highly delighting them, particularly the women, by assuring them, in very powerful language, that they were all sure to go to—Hades, or Tartarus rather. But the most interesting part of the business to Mr. Doonuffin was, that at the conclusion of this comforting discourse a collection was made for the preacher, amounting, in coppers, to fifteen-pence-halfpenny, with which he retired to the nearest gin-shop.

"Mr. Doonuffin resigned his board in favour of a friend that very evening, and, early next morning, went to Whitechapel, where he was unknown, and commenced preaching. He was too mild by far, and made but three pennyworth of impression on his hearers. In his next attempt, near Shoreditch Church, he d—d them to the amount of fivepence, and being taken up by a constable for preaching without a licence, which he and his hearers called 'being persecuted for righteousness' sake,' his fortune was made. He obtained a chapel, and, by paying court to the old women in the court where his chapel was situated, he did remarkably well, and, if he had not been married, might have formed a wealthy connexion.

"He formed, however, a connexion of another sort, and was forced to exchange duties with a brother ranter, who had come up from Staffordshire to a grand 'revival.' He soon became a 'star' among the Potteries; and, as he wrote an excellent hand, and was a good accountant, he set up school, and assumed the degree of Doctor, without paying any fees for it.

"When Acorn House was vacant, the lawyer, who had made his own fortune by ruining his patron, and was one of the doctor's

most attentive hearers, advised him to take the house, and advertise in every paper, every day for a month, for boarders at twenty-two guineas a year, including every thing. The plan succeeded, and his house was so full that he was unable to teach the boys Latin and Greek (of which he knew not a word) himself, so he resolved to engage what he called a 'regular tip-top out-and-outer from the university.'

"When I was introduced to the doctor, he was sitting in his library—in a large purple-leather reading-chair. Before him was a table with an enormous bible, open, and various tracts scattered about upon it. In appearance he was a well-fed man, with a roguish-looking eye, which he endeavoured to hide by combing his hair smooth over his forehead. He wore a neat but pharisaically-cut suit of black, and a small white plaited stock round his neck.

"I don't know what his ideas of an A. B. might have been, but he seemed rather surprised when I announced the object of my call. I had on a green cutaway coat, buff waistcoat, and white duck trousers, and certainly looked more like a sporting character than an usher.

"He asked me a very few questions about my attainments, and, when I told him I had read Thucydides, Livy, and the usual routine of classics, seemed amazed at my erudition. He begged to see my diploma.

"'My diploma, sir?' said I 'I really don't know what you mean.'

"'Why,' he replied, 'I suppose you paid pretty handsomely for your degree, and of course you took a receipt for the money—a certificate to prove that you are what you profess to be—a Bachelor of Arts.'

"I assured him, that, though a degree at Oxford was an expensive honour, they never gave us any thing to show for it.

"'I'm sorry for that, sir, for I must have a *real* A. B., and I know for certain that some men assume a degree to which they have no right or title.'

"'D. D.,' thought I, but—merely said that I fortunately could prove my bachelorship by referring him to the Oxford calendar.

"'This point being settled, he began to talk about terms, and seemed pleased when I told him that I merely wanted a home and provisions, until I could get into orders.

"He offered to give me thirty guineas a year, which I accepted upon one condition, that I should have a bedroom to myself, and nothing to do with the boys out of school-hours.

"When this was also settled, and he had given me a plain hint that I should alter my dress, he introduced me to the dining-room and his wife, a very *fine* woman, in every sense of the word, but evidently a Tartar. I dined with them, and returned to Oldeton,

promising to be in my 'classical chair' on the 25th of July—the day on which the vacation ended.

"Old Fidel did not like the idea of my leaving him, and gave me to understand that I had fixed upon a profession I should soon be glad to relinquish. He entertained me with a great many anecdotes of a friend of his who had been an usher in a school, and was tortured to death by the boys. I had a notion that, as long as the muscles of my arm were sound, no such fate would befall me.

"On the eventful 25th I took up my abode at Acorn House; and, as the boys did not return all at the same time, but kept dropping in, one by one, like singers in a country church, I had not much work to do for the first week. There were about ninety boys, and *such* boys I never saw before! All had short-cropped hair, and corduroys, dirty faces, and brown holland pinbefores. To rule these brutes there were four ushers. I tried to form a class of the biggest boys, and drive the Latin grammar into them. It was of no use by fair means, so I determined to try what the stick would do. I told the biggest boy, who was a long loose-made lout, that if he did not learn his lesson perfectly the next morning, I should cane him well.

"'Wull 'e though? I should rayther loike to catch 'e at it!' he replied, with a very knowing shake of the head, and a wink to the rest of the class, that made them all laugh.

"I seized the doctor's walking-stick, which happened to be lying near, and shook it very significantly. The lad, by no means daunted, drew a large bread-and-cheese-knife—a hack-knife as boys call it, and said:—

"'If you do touch me, I'll stick this into thee!'

"I struck him a sharp blow on the knuckles, and the knife fell from his hand. I then seized him by the collar, and gave him a sound thrashing, which winded me, crippled him, and destroyed the bamboo. One of his friends, who seemed inclined to defend him, I knocked down, and told the others I should serve them in the same way if they did not sit down quietly.

"As I had settled the two biggest bullies in the school, I thought I had done enough for one day, and retired to my room. In the evening, after supper, Doctor Doonuffin begged I would walk into his library, as he wished to speak to me. I went accordingly. It struck me that the library was perfumed rather highly with the scent of rum, and that the doctor's face was redder than usual, and his step not so steady and dignified.

"He asked me if I ever smoked, to which I answered that I was fond of a good *cigar*. He confessed that he preferred a pipe of shag tobacco, and, opening a drawer, which was labelled 'Anti-creature-comforts Society,' took out a box of Havannahs, his pipe, and a jar of tobacco. He rang the bell, and ordered a kettle of hot water, and, when it was brought, extracted from a niche in his bookcase,

inscribed, 'Spiritual Consolation for melancholy Christians,' a large stone jar of best old Jamaica, and a ditto of gin.

"As soon as he had made two very stiff glasses, which he called 'whistlers,' and lit his pipe, he addressed me thus :—

"'Mr. Smyth, sir, I am very much pleased you have broken Bill Blinks's head; for, to tell you the truth, I have often longed to do it myself, but was afraid of him. Without intending it, however, you have done me a great and irreparable injury. I profess to teach on the 'soothing system.' I advertise 'no corporeal punishments,' and that boy Bill, and his friend Bob Bunks, whom you with great science and propriety knocked down, have run away, and to-morrow, I dare say, half the school will follow their example; they can't to-night, for I've locked them up, and taken all their shoes and corduroys away. Come, sir, *empty* your-glass, and I'll brew again.'

"I did so, thinking that a few more glasses would enable me to gain an insight into his real character. I ventured to ask him to explain his 'soothing system.'

"'Why, you see, sir, mothers don't like to have their children beaten black and blue, and boys will sometimes resist—as I know by experience; for I assisted in a rebellion myself, in which my master was beaten to a jelly, and marked for life, by having his nose nearly knocked off with the edge of an unframed slate. I find it much more profitable and not half so dangerous to send them to bed without their meals—that's my plan, sir.'

"'But,' said I, 'I can see no economy in that, for I suppose they eat double at the next meal.'

"'No such thing,' he replied. 'If it's breakfast, I tell the cook to smoke their bread-and-milk, or stir it up with a rushlight; if dinner, I cut them all fat, and underdone; and if supper, I take care that they have a mouldy crust, and rindy cheese—that's my plan, sir.'

"'How you can teach boys without punishing them with a stick or rod, I can't imagine,' said I.

"'Teach! You don't suppose I teach? I keep three assistants besides yourself, sir, and no man who keeps a dog, thinks it necessary to bark himself. They teach—at least pretend to do so, which does quite as well. I attend to their 'moral and religious sentiments,' prayers and morning hymn before breakfast, prayers and evening ditto before supper, and bible twice on Sundays; besides joining my own flock at chapel—that's my plan, sir. Come, *empty* your glass.'

"'I am afraid,' I observed, 'I shall not be able to do the boys justice, for they don't seem disposed to learn unless they are made to do it.'

"'Never you mind about that, sir—if they won't learn, it ain't your fault—you'll find it more agreeable to tell them their lessons, if they can't say them, than trying to make them do it; take it easy

—that's my plan, sir. Give them plenty of books, best editions, well bound—it answers—twenty per cent. is a fair profit. I mean all the boys to learn Latin—charge four guineas extra for it—that's my plan, sir. Take another cigar.'

" 'You keep your boys remarkably well, sir,' I remarked, 'and I can't think how you manage to do it for 22*l.* per annum.'

" 'Why, as to the 22*l.* per annum, that I'll explain presently; as to the provisions, you see, I manage in this way. If Mr. Lyver the butcher does not send me pupils enough to cover his bill, I threaten to deal with his rival, Mr. Hart, and I always deal only with those tradesmen that send me their sons—if they stick it on, so do I—pens, paper, slates, combs, brushes, knives, and Mrs. Doonuffin's domestic medicines—Epsom salts and Ippeckakyanney—mount up, I can tell you—that's my plan, sir—that's how I manage the vittleing department.'

" 'And as to the 22*l.* per annum?' I inquired.

" 'Why, you see, sir,' he continued, pulling out one of his cards of terms, on which was a neat engraving of Acorn House, which looked very imposing on paper. 'You see, sir, I circulate these in London, chiefly, where I have a large connexion in the dissenting interest; read, and you'll perceive that I say 'Noblemen and gentlemen's sons are splendidly boarded at the low charge of twenty-two guineas per annum, every thing included.' Now I had counsel's opinion on that card, and he tells me it can only mean that they are to be fed and lodged for that sum, it says nothing about being *taught*, so I charge extra for that—that's my plan, sir. Four guineas a year—*guineas*, you'll observe, get five per cent. by that—for writing, four for ciphering, four for book-keeping, four for Latin, four for Greek, four for geography and globes, and four more for English literature, including poetry and Bell's letters. Add books, washing, and other little *ancetteros*, and you'll find it is not done for 22*l.* per annum. Come, sir, *empt* your glass.'

" 'To my inquiry 'if he got paid,' he answered—

" 'Why, you see, sir, my friend Grigs, the lawyer, the senior deacon of my chapel, who put me in here rent free, receives two-and-a-half per cent. on all my bills, and, if the parents don't pay within a month after 'bill delivered,' he arrests them at once, and makes a pretty good thing of it—that's *his* plan, sir.'

" 'I allowed it was a very ingenious one, but not calculated to last long.

" 'You're mistaken, sir; the boys are well fed, and their clothes well washed and mended; their books are handsomely bound, and their copy and summing books neatly written out *for* them, and that satisfies most mothers. As the women have nothing to do with finding the money, they are very easily pleased; besides, I'm sure of my boys for one year, as I never send in the bill for the first half

until they return from the holidays, and have paid carriage down. They don't think it worth while to pay a quarter for nothing, and coach fares up and down in the bargain—that's my plan, sir. Take another cigar, and *empt* your glass.'

" 'Your boys, I apprehend, do not turn out very good scholars, and your plan, I still think, will in time defeat itself.'

" 'In time—very true; but you see, sir, before that time arrives I have made a few hundreds—sham ill—advertise that the care of my health requires me to retire from public life—sell the furniture and goodwill for a round sum, and open again in another part of England—that's my plan, sir.'

" 'The rum-and-water was beginning to operate—the whole man was altered—he winked with his knowing-looking eyes—thrust his hair back from his forehead into a respectable Brutus topknot and exchanged the whining-canting tones in which he had commenced his communications, for the bland, quick note in which he had been used to say to his lady-customers, 'Serve *you* in a minute, mum—can I do any thin more for *you*?' I therefore ventured to hint to him a wish to hear something of his early history. He readily complied with it, and gave me the account of which I have given a brief summary.

" 'And Mrs. Doonuffin,' said I, wishing to lead him on, 'was the daughter of—'

" 'Skaley, the carcass-butcher of West Smithfield. A very fine girl she was, sir; such a colour!—all the effect of the smell of raw beef. Her father refused my offers of taking her carcass, and swore I should never have a joint of her body. I persevered—private meetings—awkward, but likely results—the commodity was damaged—not marketable—took her off his hands for 500*l*, with which I set up for myself—you know with what success. Old Skaley could not start me again—he killed himself by eating six pounds of his own steaks, and drinking a quart of gin for a wager. Come you don't *empt* your glass.

" 'I'm sorry to tell you, sir,' he continued, resuming his story, and putting on a chapel-look, 'that the only thing he left his daughter was an ungodly liking for steaks and gin. I have tried precept and example, but without effect, to cure her of so disgusting a practice—I mean in a lady. I once went to the expence of two rumps of prime beef, and had them cut up, and served hot and hot for four hours, and set a nine-gallon keg of gin by her bedside, with a tap in, and a tumbler by it. The only effect was, she declared, after the third plate, that she would not eat any more unless I would send out for a barrel of oysters, and make them into sauce for her. I did so—she got drunk, sir—*very* drunk, and was ill; but it did not kill her—cure her, I mean, and I had the satisfaction of paying a long bill for draughts and pills, in addition to the original outlay for pro-

visions. I allow her a pint a day now, sir, and lock up the 'cellar—that's my plan, sir; but I suspect she has a plan of her own; a pint could never affect her head, and make her snore as she does six nights out of the seven. Yet I must say, she's a prudent woman—must give her credit for that—she never gets fuddled till the boys are gone to bed. Take another cigar, sir; I am afraid you don't like them.'

"I told him I had, I thought, given him good proof to the contrary, as I had taken four, and was afraid to venture another.

"'Four! what's four cigars?' said he, contemptuously thrusting another into my hand. 'Why, when I belonged to our club, *The Bucks*, we never parted under a dozen, and on grand nights, a dozen and a half, with liquid to match. Ah, those were the days! sich prime chaps! dabs at whist! Do you play whist, sir?—But I never play now—it wants four, and it's against the rules of the congregation—happy chaps the regular clergy—regular rubber every night if they like, while we poor voluntary labourers in the vineyard—d—n it—can't even lay a shilling on the odd trick. We might manage a game at cribbage—pretty game for two—learned it of my little Susan—nice girl—apt to peg rather too fast.'

"'Susan who?' I inquired.

"'Don't recollect her other name—nice little girl—rather expensive—two pound a week, and lots of muslin—she never wore cotton. Free admission to Drury Lane, and all that—Mrs. Doonuffin very jealous of her; but we *can* manage a touch at cribbage, a shilling a game, and half a crown on the rub; got a board there in that drawer marked '*Whole Duty of Man*.' No one will know it—my wife never intrudes here; I tell her that I can't be interrupted in composing my moving discourses, and she's better engaged—that's my plan, sir. *Empty your glass*.'

"'There is no rule without an exception—it may have been said before; and Mrs. Doonuffin, to prove it, made an exception to her rule of never interrupting the doctor's compositions; for just as he was compounding another 'whistler,' XXX strong, a violent scuffle, and the sounds of voices in anger, were heard in the passage leading to the library, the door of which was dashed violently open, and the lady of the house rushed in, dragging by the hair of her head with one hand, and cuffing on the cheek with the other, a plain-looking, squinting woman, who held the situation of box-maid in the establishment.

"'Mrs. Doonuffin was constitutionally liable to severe attacks of the 'green-eyed monster,' and her husband's 'gallivantings,' as she called them, had increased the disorder to an alarming height. She never hired a girl who could boast of a pretty, or even a not-ugly face, but gave a pound a year more wages for a person pitted with the small-pox, two for a squinter, and would willingly have given

an additional five for a broken nose and an eye knocked out; a toothless wretch, with a Richard-the-third back, was invaluable.

"She hurled the box-maid into the room, and furthered her progress by an application of her foot *au derrière*, and staggering up to the doctor, after locking the door, stood with one hand akimbo, and the other holding on by the table; and as soon as she had recovered her breath, which had been exhausted by her extraordinary exertions, she addressed him in a speech which certainly had the merit of rapidity and indistinctness of articulation, mingled with the tones and slang of a cockney hackney-coachman.

"So—so—so, you wile, vorthless willan, you hoverfed, double-faced, dissembling conwenticler!! you otblooded, preaching, and praying woluntary!!! you sarm-singin, vench-enticin congregationer!!! You ain't satisfied with avin vun 'oman as dotes upon you dreadful, and as ought to be the comfort of your soul, and the hidul of your art! her as brought you a lovely babby a month arter she was married—a lovely babby, I say, though it was a dead un; but you must go for to try to sedoose a poor, hinnocent, nasty trolloping, unedicated creater like that.'

"The lady pointed *à la* Siddons indignantly at the box-maid, who was doing, what is called an impossibility, two things at once—crying bitterly, and arranging her 'dishevelled locks.'

"The doctor, who had laid down his pipe, and popped his grog under his shovel hat, looked in the direction indicated by his wife's hand, but merely replied,

"'You're drunk, Mrs. Doonuffin; you've been drinking, marm, and have allowed your sanguinary imagination to get the better of your ordinary sobriety of demeanour.'

"'I get drunk, you solitary, selfish sot! You're beastly drunk yourself, and fancies has hother people his the same. You—'

"Fearing that I might be *de trop* in this interesting marital and uxorious squabble, I ventured to ask to be allowed to retire; but the lady begged I would be seated, and listen to her tale of the wrongs inflicted on her by the 'vorthy and respectable minister of the Woluntary Chapel.'

"'This wery last hevening as ever was, hi was hobligated for to hask the assistance of that young 'oman to elp me hup to bed, cos I was a sufferin from a giddiness in my ed—'

"'Ginniness, you mean, marm,' said the doctor.

"'Feller! who's a torkin to you? Vell, I feels wery faint jist as hi gits to her room, and hi sais, Betty, sais hi, we'll go hin and sit down a bit. She tries to purwent me; and the more she tries, the more I would not be purwented. Vell, I sits down on the bed, and on the pillar I fnds this wery suspicious and hundeniable harticle!'

"She extracted from her pocket a very large and comfortable anti-rheumatic double-cotton nightcap, that evidently formed no



portion of a female's *toilette*, and threw it indignantly at her husband.

“ ‘There can't be no doubt, you perfidious hoathbreaking hindividual, as you was a going for to—’

“ ‘What disclosures might have ensued must remain a mystery, for Dr. Doonuffin jumped up, and gave his wife so hard a pat on the head with the folio bible, in reply to her challenge, indicated by ‘throwing down’ the nightcap, that she fell to the floor perfectly insensible. The doctor raised her in his arms, and, with the assistance of the box-maid, who knocked her mistress's head against the doorpost—by chance, of course, as she passed the door—conveyed her to bed.

“ ‘When he returned, he relighted his pipe, and coolly observed, ‘That's my plan, sir.’

“ ‘He fell into a deep reverie, and, I presume, from the exertion he had undergone, seemed to be much intoxicated, and troubled with the hiccups. I did not interrupt him as I was engaged in meditating upon the pleasant life I should be likely to lead with this happy couple, and the nice young noblemen and gentlemen committed to their valuable superintendence.

“ ‘After nearly a quarter of an hour's silence he roused himself, and requested me to ‘*empt* my glass.’

“ ‘I declined, and begged to be allowed to retire.

“ ‘*One* more—*one* more, my dear (hiccup) young friend—a parting cup; a bumper at parting, but that (hiccup) ain't in the hymn-book.’

“ ‘In spite of my resistance, he contrived to pour a quantity of gin into my glass, and a still larger on the carpet, and, having filled his own with pure rum, he sat down and began again.

“ ‘You're a very nice young man—I know you are—I feel it here (hiccup)—I've formed a very violent affection for you; I have indeed—David and Jonathan-like—Sampson and Delilahish—Ruth and Boaz a fool to it (hiccup)—I'm going to prove it—you're a fool!—you're going into the church—you're an ass! (hiccup.) Take my advice and try the volunteers—voluntaries, I mean. You don't care about whist—what's the use of being ordained? pawed by a bishop? (hiccup.) What's a curacy? Forty pounds, and keep yourself!—Buy a bible—cheap enough at the pawnbroker's—join the jumpers, shakers, or screamers, it's no matter which—get a chapel, two hundred a year, and all your grub (hiccup). Single man—stick to the women—lots of white pocket-handerchiefs—dine with one—sup with another—nice and hot—breakfast with a third—prime twankay—never mind the men, and your fortune's made. Get married to—’

“ ‘Whom, he could not inform me; for in his zeal to gain me over to his notions—to ‘convert me to his faith,’ I ought to have

said—he used much gesticulation, and, advancing too forward in his chair, he lost his equilibrium, and fell with his forehead on the edge of the fender.

“ I left him, and sent his friend the box-maid to him, who, I imagined, would know how to take care of him and carry him to bed.

“ On the following day he appeared at ‘ prayers and morning hymn,’ with a large patch of sticking-plaster upon his forehead, and after breakfast he took me by the arm, and walked out into the park. He begged I would take no notice of the little touch of epilepsy he had had the night before, as it might alarm the female part of his congregation.

“ I assured him I would not, and inquired after the health of his wife.

“ ‘ Ah ! that horrid vice ! Mr. Smyth, she has a most distressing headache, and can’t get up—a soul insnaring sin, sir—she can’t eat breakfast—I always lay in a good one—that’s my plan, sir.’

“ Soon after I had taken my ‘ classical chair,’ a very stout man, in very thick brown top-boots, and a very large ash-stick in his hand, came into the school-room, and, after surveying the three English ushers, walked up to me, and begged to know if my name was Smyth. On my answering in the affirmative, he asked me ‘ if I was the man as thrashed his son yesterday.’

“ ‘ Yes,’ I replied, ‘ and I think he richly deserved it.’

“ ‘ Oh !—thee dost thee, and wouldst thrash un again ?’

“ ‘ Decidedly, if he dared to draw a knife on me.’

“ ‘ Wouldst thrash un well ? Hit un hard loike ?’

“ ‘ Certainly, as hard and as long as I could.’

“ ‘ Dang it, mon, gee’s thine hond ! I loike thee the better vor it. But thee didn’t do un half justice. Coom along wi’ I, and I’ll shew thee how to whop un.’

“ I followed him to the hall, where master Billy and his friend Bobby were standing and listening sulkily to a lecture on improprieties, delivered by the doctor, upon ‘ his plan,’ and in his best didactic style.

“ Mr. Blinks caught hold of his son, and beat him so severely that I was forced to interfere.

“ ‘ There, my lad, that’s the way to whop un ! I’ll gie thee my ashen stick, and a good dinner whenever you loike to coom over to farm.’

“ Mrs. Doonuffin did not make her appearance at dinner, but sent for her friend, Mr. Grigs, the lawyer, and deacon of the chapel. Soon after he arrived, the doctor was summoned to his wife’s bedroom, and a long discussion ensued ‘ with closed doors.’

“ In about an hour’s time I was summoned to the library, where I found Mr. Grigs *solus*. He put three five-pound notes

into my hand, and told me that Doctor Doonuffin had altered his mind, and meant to undertake the classical department himself—he had paid me for the half-year, to which I was fully entitled, and had taken my place in the Oldeton coach, which would be at the lodge in a few minutes. I took the hint, the notes, and my departure.

“Mr. Grigs walked with me, telling one of the servants to follow with my boxes. I turned round to ‘take a last fond look’ at Acorn House, and saw the respectable owner at his bedroom window; he made a sign, by putting his hand to his mouth, like a person in the act of drinking, and pointed behind him towards the bed, to intimate, I suppose, that his wife was the cause of my dismissal. Grigs shook hands with me, and hinted that the ‘tongue was a dangerous weapon,’ and that the ‘least said the soonest things were mended’—a hint which I took—disclosing my adventures only to Fidel and James Jobs.”

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“Well,” said the Bursar, “I think that must do for to-night. Peter!—brandy-and-water—and put me in mind of sponcing the cook to-morrow morning. Eels overdone, mutton underdone, snipes a mass of corruption, and fondu scorched to a cinder—it’s too bad—I’ll sponce him a guinea.”

“Very right,” said the dean. “We will dine in my rooms next week—finish Sam’s MS., and give Coquus another trial. If he don’t succeed better than he has to-day—we’ll expel him. It’s abominable that we should be deprived of the few little enjoyments to which we are justly entitled under the founder’s will.”

*Omnes.*—“Very abominable indeed!”

## CHAPTER VIII.

SAM SMYTH’S MS.—*continued.*

“P., my dear!” exclaimed my affectionate wife, in rather over-loud tones, at the foot of the staircase, “*dippishy voo*, the Dean has sent for you.”

“I’ll go to him as soon as I am dressed,” I replied.

“Then *fate voter toylet* as quick as you can, for he is in a great hurry, and his temper ain’t none of the best when he’s thwarted.”

To this base insinuation I made no reply, but hurried on my clothes; and rejecting Mr. Chaps’s offer to take off my beard “in less than no time,” went into college, and found the Dean walking

up and down the cloisters with his finger to his nose—a habit in which he invariably indulges when thinking profoundly.

He started as from a dream when I asked him what he wanted me for, and without replying went up to his rooms. I followed him; and when he had closed the door, stirred the fire, and seated himself in his well-stuffed chair with his legs on the comforter, addressed me thus:

“Peter, I’ve been thinking deeply, but unsuccessfully.”

“Very unusual with you, sir,” I replied.

“I know it, Peter—I know it; your powers of recollection will enable you to remember that I invited our Bursar and senior tutor to dine with me in my rooms.”

“Yes, sir, to give Coquus an opportunity of retrieving his character.”

“You have an excellent memory, Peter, for it’s a week ago; an interval of time during which I have been occupied in thinking painfully and profoundly on—what I should order for dinner. Heigho! It is a very important matter—very. What can I do?”

“Leave it to Coquus, sir.”

“No, Peter, no; his ideas are too common-place; his imagination does not reach beyond cod’s head and shoulders—a joint and pudding. What can I do? really one’s life in college is nothing but worry and care. Would that our beneficent founder had considerately appointed a Mrs. Dean to share in the weighty duties of my important office.”

“It would have been a comfortable arrangement in some respects, sir, no doubt; but perhaps it is better as it is.”

“Perhaps it is, Peter—you speak from experience. Go and consult with Mrs. Priggins, and let me know her opinions *instantly*.”

“Mrs. P., my dear,” said I, to my wife, who was industriously engaged in knuckling a mass of paste, to form what she calls a *patty de vo*, which she considers is the French for a calf-tart, “the Dean wishes you to give him a bill of fare for a nice little dinner; even in so trifling a matter he adheres to the *dux fœmina facti*.”

“Why, as to *ducks*, P., tame uns is out, and wild uns ain’t come in; but I’ll make him a *cart*, I worn’t edicated by a *shay-de-queezeen* for nothing.”

After denuding her arms of the flour in which they were hidden, she took a pen and a scrap of paper, and with those strange contortions of face peculiar to persons who are unaccustomed to public writing, made out her *cart*, which I conveyed as rapidly as possible to the expecting Dean.

He wiped his spectacles, deposited them carefully on his nose, and unfolded the important manuscript; but after turning it first one way, and then another, holding it close to his nose, and then

at the distance of his extended arm, threw it on the table in a rage, exclaiming—

“Peter, mother Priggins is an ass!”

I could not contradict him, but ventured to ask respectfully, if I could remove any little difficulties arising from illegibility or inaccuracy.

“Little difficulties, sir! Why there are hieroglyphics in that document that would puzzle the professor of Arabic, and drive my friend of the Anglo-Saxon chair mad.”

“Allow me to expound, sir; I know her hand well.”

“No doubt; and have felt the weight of it too.”

Of this indecent allusion to our private arrangements, I took not the slightest notice, but picked up the *cart* and read the contents, which were these—

Purtarge

*O ree ally paoray. or els, o shoe.*

horedooover,

*wheat narteeve and jambon de Yorkshire*

Poison.

*filly de sole and moroo ally mater dotell*

Peayce de raysistance

*filly de boo sotay o troof or blanket de vo o shampinion*  
ontermay.

*pom de tare al o desell. and schickoray ally crame.*

ontray.

*queeze de pully and paredri o naturell*

Patty sery.

*vollyvong de sarevell de vo. and toort dongweel vegitarbles,*  
*pang and frumarge ar discrayshun.*

“Well, sir,” inquired the Dean, when I had with difficulty made out my wife’s characters, “what do you understand by all that nonsense? Really the miseries of a college life are almost unbearable!”

“Leave the dinner to me, sir, and I’ll do my best to satisfy you.”

“I will, Peter—I will; you have relieved me of an immensity of anxiety. The stomach sympathizes with the mind—bring me a basin of gravy-soup, and a pint of sherry, immediately.”

I will not say what dishes resulted from my consultation with Coquus; they proved so satisfactory to all the party that the Dean’s eyes twinkled with delight, the Bursar’s sparkled, and the senior tutor expressed his admiration by winking at both of them, and uttering an emphatic “hum.” Instead of being sconced and turned out of his situation, the cook was rewarded by an order for a gallon of beer in the buttery.

"Now," said the Bursar, "if your port proves as good as the dinner, we will pour out a plentiful libation to the *manes* of poor Sam Smyth."

The Dean looked a little indignant at the *if*, but, slowly imbibing his first glass, nodded approvingly, and pronounced it decidedly to be "Syms's best."

The Bursar and tutor positively declined giving their opinions upon the *first* glass; but, after the third, expressed their "satisfaction in being able to accord with the sentiment expressed by their hospitable friend at the head of the table."

I can safely say that they were right in their judgment, from the two glasses I contrived to prig out of each bottle—merely as a sample.

The Bursar had come provided with the remainder of the MS., and proceeded with the story—thus :

"My sudden removal from Acorn House was equally as agreeable to old Fidel as to myself. He fondly hoped that the taste I had had of the sweets of ushership would reconcile me to living on his bounty until I could get a curacy as a title for orders. In this he was mistaken. I appreciated his kindness too highly to trespass upon it; I therefore called on my friend, and former master, Dr. Bright, and begged his advice and assistance in procuring some employment which would provide me with food and raiment until the period of my ordination arrived.

"I found him sitting in his little study, which opened by a glass-door into his garden. A heap of uncorrected exercises lay at his elbow, and a pile of impositions—that is, tasks done out of school-hours as a punishment—were being consigned to the flames.

"'Good morning, Dr. Bright. You are, I see, at your usual work.'

"'Ah! Mr. Smyth, I am pleased to see you. I am indeed employed as usual; my life resembles that of the horse in the mill, the same dull round of grinding, grinding, grinding, day after day, and my mill produces but little grist. I must not, however, complain; for when I look around at my former college friends and brother clergymen, I see so many of them, men of superior attainments and greater moral worth than myself, wearing away their lives in penury and want, on small livings or smaller curacies, that I must consider myself fortunate. How are you employing yourself now?'

"'I am reading for orders, sir; and, as you know the misfortunes of my family, I need not tell you that I am, at present, depending on Mr. Fidel for support. I have ventured to call on you to solicit your interest in obtaining me some situation as private tutor in a family, or even teacher in a school.'

"'As to the latter, my dear sir, you had better break stones on the road at a shilling a day, or, like the Israelites in Egypt, make

your tale of bricks without straw, than pass a life of misery in such a situation. I always have, and always shall endeavour to treat my assistants as gentlemen and friends ; but boys will be boys, and ushers will always be looked upon as a pack of cards—manufactured only to be made a game of.’

“ I told him that I had had a fortnight’s experience in ushership, and would rather not undertake the office again, if any other means of getting my living could be obtained ; and briefly detailed to him my adventures at Acorn House, omitting the scene in the library.

“ ‘ Ah, sir, if the world could only see into the trickery practised by such illiterate and imposing characters as Dr. Doonuffin, the cause of education would be much advanced ; but I will not say more on the subject, as my remarks might be considered selfish and interested. I am happy to say I have it in my power to recommend you as private tutor in the house of a clergyman, who has three little boys whom he wishes to have prepared for Eton. I do not know him personally, but, from all I have heard of him, he is a kind-hearted, though very eccentric person. I will give you a letter of introduction and recommendation to him, and would advise you to ride over and deliver it in person.’

“ He sat down, and wrote what my modesty induced me to consider a very complimentary testimonial, and directed it to the ‘ Rev. Naaman Nightshade, Rectory, Neitherside.’ He then wished me success, and begged of me to apprise him if the situation did not suit me, and he would endeavour to procure me another.

“ Old Fidel, to whom I showed my letter of introduction, was much pleased at the very favourable opinion given by Dr. Bright of my abilities and qualifications ; but he could not draw any wide distinction between an usher in a school and a tutor in a private family. He had the same ideas of rude boys, dogs-eared books, large canes, applepie-beds, and short commons, as being common to all classes of subordinate teachers. Had I been appointed head-master of Oldeton grammar-school, the case would have been altered, as he fancied an immensity of dignity belonged to any gentleman who was fortunately able to obtain such an enviable situation.

“ He knew something of the Rev. Naaman Nightshade, because he had banked with us for seven years, and the little he knew had not tended to raise him in his estimation. Fidel, like most persons in his situation, was very accurate in his accounts, and was wretched if he could not make his incomings and outgoings correspond to a farthing every Midsummer and Christmas-day. Now Mr. Nightshade, it appeared, was so careless in money matters in a large way, that his account was frequently overdrawn, and all warnings on the subject were unattended to until they stopped the supplies. When this was the case, he would call, and without examining his

account, which was another serious offence in Fidel's eyes, apologize very humbly, and pay in a large sum, offering to pay interest for the amount to which he had overdrawn.

"I confess that I thought if this was all that could be alleged against him, it was nothing very serious.

"Neitherside was but seven miles from our borough; but I had never even seen the rector, as he seldom went into society, being a very learned man, especially in the oriental languages, to the acquirement of which he had dedicated almost all his time.

"I hired a pony and rode over to the rectory. The house, which was too large for the living, was, as far as I could judge by the exterior, in a shocking state from want of repairs, and the tithe-barn, which stood within twenty yards of it, was nearly falling down. The garden which separated them was a perfect wilderness of cabbages, flowers, weeds, and shrubs, mingled together in the oddest confusion.

"I hung my pony's bridle to the gate, and was going, as I thought, to walk up to the door and knock; but the gate was locked, and I could find neither bell nor any other medium of communication with the inhabitants. I began shouting as loudly as I could, and my efforts were so far successful, that I awoke a large slumbering Newfoundland dog, who aided them by an accompaniment *contra-basso*.

"The effect produced by this duet was not exactly such as I expected, for instead of a 'liveried menial' appearing to 'open wide the castle's gate,' a little woman popped her head up from amidst a bed of brocoli, and stared at me as if she had never seen a gentleman before.

"'Hilloh! my good woman,' I cried, beckoning to her to approach, 'is your master at home?'

"Without replying to my very plain question, she cried out in a sort of scream, 'Gracious goodness! oh!' took up her basket in which were several decapitated heads of brocoli, and, with the beheading instrument in her right hand, ran into the house as I supposed.

"I waited five minutes, thinking that she was, what servants call, making herself 'fit to be seen' before she came to let me in. I then began shouting again. Again my friend in the rough great-coat aided my endeavours, but no one appeared.

"I walked round to the back of the house, thinking that there might be a side-gate, through which admittance might be gained. I could find no other entrance, however, than the gate at which my pony stood, cropping the weeds within his reach. As the dog was chained up I resolved to scale the palings, which I effected with some little damage from the splinters and tenterhooks to my sit-down-upons. I walked up in a quiet lounging way to the door,



hoping that some one might see me from the windows and apprise the rector of my arrival ; but, to my great surprise, I found them carefully boarded up. The door was knockerless, so I applied the toe of my boot with great vigour to the panels. The door, appearing to have too strong an attachment to the lintel and posts to dream of a separation, and no one appearing to answer my summons, though subpœnaed very audibly, I took the path round the house, by which the vegetable-cutter had just before vanished, taking care to keep at a respectful distance from the bow-wow, who was preparing to commence his hostilities, by raising his mane and showing his grinders, as dogs are apt to do when their suspicions are once raised.

“ I found myself in a sort of courtyard, between the stones of which the rank grass and moss were protruding ; in its centre stood what had once been a handsomely-carved stone-pump, with a sundial on its top. The nose, or gnomon, was twisted all awry, and the hours were ‘ thrown into a horrible state of confusion,’ by the dial’s reclining uneasily at an angle of 45°. It was surrounded on one side by the house, and on the other three by buildings which had once been devoted to horses, coaches, and harness—laundries, breweries, and other useful offices ; but which now seemed to have retired from business, and to be totally without employment, except as a harbour for rats and other vermin.

“ I kicked as vigorously at the back door as I had done at the front, and with the same result. I began to fancy that I must have mistaken the house ; but the directions I had received, and the contiguity of the church, made me feel that this must be the rectory. I confess I felt a little angry at being treated in so strange a manner, and was determined to gain an entrance if I was ‘ had up’ for house-breaking. I accordingly raised myself by means of a hook, which, formerly in the palmier days of the house, had served to hang horses’ bridles upon, and managed to gain the sill of one of the windows. This was evidently the window of the kitchen, for before a small fire there was a chicken pirouetting, with other indications of dinner. I tried to raise the window, but it was fastened, and I did not choose to risk the loss of two or three fingers by smashing the glass with my fist. I jumped down, and, by the aid of an old waterbutt, climbed up to a window on the other side of the door, which, like the kitchen-window, was half closed by the bottom shutters being pulled up.

“ The moment my head appeared above the shutter, bang went a pistol or gun, the ball of which passed through and shattered the pane of glass within a foot of me. I need not tell you that I descended much quicker than I ascended, and ran into what had been the stable, for fear of a second shot.

“ I waited for some minutes, peeping through the window

without seeing any one; but, at length, a powdered bald head shewed itself at the broken pane, and then a face in which terror and alarm were strongly depicted. By its side, after a few seconds, appeared the countenance of the servant whom I had seen in the garden. After peering about for some time, they seemed to talk earnestly together, and I resolved to shew myself, not doubting that my respectable outer-man would allay their very extraordinary state of alarm; but the moment I appeared, they disappeared, and the woman uttered her 'My goodness gracious! oh!' in a most piercing shriek.

"I was puzzled what to do under these very extraordinary circumstances. If I presented myself at the window, I felt assured I should be used as a target for a second shot. If I went to the door and kicked again, I might have been fired at through the panel. At last I hit upon a plan, which fortunately succeeded. I split the end of my ashen riding-stick with a knife, and inserted my letter into the slit, as I had seen the crier of the court do at our assizes when he had occasion to hand up a message or note to the clerk of arraigns, or any of the barristers. I held the letter up to the broken pane, and was much pleased to find it snatched off my stick with a violent jerk.

"After waiting a few minutes, which I imagined were occupied in the perusal of my despatch, the door was opened with some difficulty, as it was protected by more locks, bolts, and bars, than are used for a prison-gate, and the rector rushed out and began to shake my hand and apologize to me for the rude reception I had met with through an unfortunate mistake.

"He ushered me into the room from which the shot had come, and, to my great surprise, introduced me to the cabbage-cutter as Mrs. Nightshade. Her dress and appearance were certainly inferior to her station; nor did her manners indicate the position she held in the family; for to the 'Mr. Smyth, my dear,' of her husband, she replied, with the species of courtesy called a 'short bob,' 'Hopes I sees'e well, sir.'

"Before I proceed with the account of our interview and its results, it will be better to give Mr. Naaman Nightshade's history as briefly as possible.

"In one of the numerous courts in the neighbourhood of Carey Street, Lincoln's Inn, lived Mr. Nightshade, senior, the father of the Rector of Neitherside. He was a painstaking, busy little man, who earned a livelihood by keeping a bookstall, which was much resorted to by bibliomaniacs, who delighted in worming out odd volumes of books, valuable only for their antiquity, uselessness, and scarcity.

"In that dingy, dirty, well-filled store, at the age of fourteen, Naaman was placed by his father to keep shop whilst he went out

to look for, and purchase at, 'old libraries for sale.' He had had a decent education at the Wesleyan school, of which sect his parents were rigid and conscientious followers.

"Whether his being named after Naaman the Syrian induced him to study the Syriac language, or the finding of an old grammar of that tongue amidst his father's stores, I cannot say. He applied so zealously, however, to his new pursuit, that he entirely neglected the business of the shop, or rather window, for most of Nightshade's bargains were completed out of doors. His mother, fortunately, had no other child, and found time to attend to the business and shield him from the anger of his father, who cared nothing for the contents of his books beyond what they would fetch in the market.

"Naaman had managed to make himself tolerably well acquainted with his favourite language, and had commenced the study of Hebrew, before his father discovered the manner in which he passed his time. He was surprised when he returned home, and relieved him from attending to the store, that his son, instead of slipping out and playing with the little dirty boys in the court, went up to his room and only left it to eat his meals in haste, and then, too, not unless he was summoned; still, as the boy was quiet, and, as he thought, attentive to the business in his absence, he did not trouble himself about the matter.

"It happened one day that his mother, who went daily to Clare-market, to purchase provisions, met with an accident by slipping upon a piece of turnip-paring, and was obliged to keep her bed for a few days. Naaman tried all he could to leave his books and watch the customers who peered over the stall as they passed; but, on the second day, thinking he could read and watch too, he brought down his pentateuch, and was soon so deeply engaged in it that all else was forgotten.

"Among the constant purchasers at the stall was the vicar of the parish—a little, queer, irritable old gentleman, who spent most of his time and all his money in collecting old and rare editions of the Classics. It chanced that an Elzevir Horace lay in Mr. Nightshade's window, upon which Dr. Cobweb had cast a longing eye, and determined to cheapen, if possible—but to buy, at any rate.

"He took up the book, and, pretending to examine it in a careless manner, as if it were of no value in his eyes, asked, in a sort of contemptuous tone, what was the lowest price of 'that thing.' To which he was surprised at receiving no reply. He repeated it, and seeing that the boy did not even raise his head, hastily and unjustly concluded that he meant to insult him.

"He entered the shop, Elzevir in hand, and, putting the question for the third time, in a very loud voice, without obtaining

an answer, gave poor Naaman a smart blow on the head with the rare edition, and called him a dirty little blackguard.

Naaman sprung from his stool, and gazed on the vicar with his eyes in which there was 'no speculation;' then, quietly rubbing his head, sat down again and went on with his studies.

"Dr. Cobweb could not stand this, but did what he rarely did with a book he purchased—made use of it, and raised sundry bumps upon the head of his insulter.

"Naaman stared, and repeated the rubbing process, and, as he had been busily tracing the course of the river Hiddekel, answered his tormentor's question, 'What's the lowest price, you little ragamuffin?' by assuring him, 'That it flowed through Assyria and Ethiopia, and emptied itself into the Persian Gulf, by the two branches called Pison and Gihon.'

"The doctor, who, as a divine, was supposed to know all this, rewarded him for the ill-timed information, by giving him as sound a thrashing as so small a theologian could inflict.

"Nightshade *père* arrived home at this moment, and was surprised to find his old and excellent customer maltreating his boy; but, on listening to the cause, was so enraged, that he seconded the motion, and thrashed him himself with the bag of books which he had been busied in collecting that morning.

"The only apology poor Naaman could offer was, 'I was only a-reading of Hebrew;' but it drew the vicar's attention, and, upon questioning the boy, he was surprised to find that he had made some little progress in the language.

"Naaman told him that he liked the Syrian better, which led to further explanations, the result of which was, that the doctor gave him a guinea to atone for his unjust blows, and, after a time, prevailed on his father, who hesitated only from religious scruples, to send him as a private pupil to his curate, to prepare him for college.

"Naaman made such excellent use of his time, that at the age of seventeen he stood for and gained a scholarship at St. Mark's College, in our University, and, after a successful career through the schools, was elected to the chair of Arabic professor.

"After committing several enormities, arising from his habitual absence of mind, he was presented, by the prime minister of the day, to the government-living of Neitherside, as a reward of his great learning and piety.

"Of his eccentricities at college, I shall only give a specimen.

"When it came to his turn to preach his first sermon, as professor, before the University, he prepared a discourse, and took for his text the well-known words, 'Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants in the Syrian language; for they understand it.' And, in order to prove that *he* did so, he wrote so long and zealously, that when the day arrived and St. Mary's was crammed, he continued preaching

for three hours, and was amazed to find, when he lifted his eyes from his book, for the first time, that all his audience had deserted him, but the vice-chancellor, the proctors, and the beadles, who were all looking very sleepy and tired. He stared, closed his MS., and, without uttering the usual conclusion, rushed from the pulpit, and, unattended by the poker-bearer, ran all the way to his rooms without his cap.

“He married an agreeable, amiable lady, with whom he passed two years of uninterrupted happiness. She, however, fell a victim to consumption, after giving birth to a girl; and, as a residence in Oxford grew distasteful to him, he resigned his professorship, and retired to his living, taking with him the child and its nurse-maid.

“In the country, his old habits, resulting from absence of mind, against which his wife had cautiously guarded him, returned with greater force, and many were the absurdities he committed, to the amusement as well as annoyance of his parishioners.

“It not unfrequently happened, that, just as he was leaving his house for church on the Sunday morning, his servant Tabitha, or Tab, as he familiarly called her, was obliged to remind him that a pair of drawers and a dressing-gown were not exactly the proper costume for the reading-desk and pulpit, and the congregation were kept waiting until Tab pronounced him all right.

“One day the sermon which he had prepared for an especial occasion could no where be found. The house was searched from top to bottom, but without success, and he was obliged to substitute another discourse, which had no reference whatever to the service for which his flock were assembled. In the course of the following week Tab found the missing manuscript in the soup-tureen, where her master had deposited it that he might be *sure* to know where to find it.

“Unfortunately for his parishioners, he fancied himself very clever in physic, and undertook to relieve the parish doctor of a great deal of trouble and expense, by offering to give attendance, advice, and medicines gratis. How many he might have killed had he been allowed to persevere in his practice I cannot guess, but one unfortunate mistake that he made induced the village Esculapius to decline his further services.

“A poor old woman, who was suffering severely from indigestion—the consequences of eating some tough bull-beef—sent to him, and begged his assistance to relieve her. He felt her pulse, examined her tongue, and went through the usual routine of medical humbug with professional nicety, and, on uttering his usual ‘Hah! I’ve an idea,’ asked her if she had ever taken castor-oil.

“‘Ees, sir, often and often,’ replied his patient.

“‘Then I’ll send you some—mix it in a basin of gruel, hold

your nose tight while you drink it, and the nauseousness will not offend you.'

" 'Ees, sir, I wool.'

" Naaman sent her a pint bottle of the nastiness, and the old lady turned the whole of its contents into the gruel, and then with great difficulty, and after holding her nose for three-quarters of an hour, into her stomach. The consequence was—she was nearly killed, and threatened to 'have up' her pastor and master for trying to 'pi-son' her. This, and the administering of tincture of opium, instead of tincture of rhubarb, to an infant who had the *pantinoodles*, which is supposed to be Anglo-Saxon for the belly-ache, induced him to give up practising the healing art.

" Tab, who really loved the infant intrusted to her care, was kept in a constant state of alarm, lest he should operate on his own child whilst it was teething; but, being, as single gentlemen's maids are wont to be—pretty nearly master, she would not allow him to see the babe until her fever had subsided.

" 'Tab,' said he to her one evening, 'I've an idea.'

" 'Should n't wonder—you has a good many of 'em, and very queer ones some of 'em is.'

" 'I've made up my mind to it—*decretum est*.'

" 'Don't talk so to me, but put it in plain words.'

" 'I'll get married again,' said her master to the maid, who, not liking the idea of being subjected to petticoat-government again, after having had every thing her own way for some time replied:—

" 'And what woman do you think would go for to marry such a queer, odd body as you?'

" 'Ah! very true—I—I never thought of that.'

" 'I knows of but one,' said Tab, dropping her hand, *by chance*, on her master's knee, and, looking into his eyes with her own pretty blue sparklers, 'as 'ud put up with all yur queer ways, and make you comfitible for life.'

" 'Ah! you've an idea—and who is she?'

" 'Lawks!' cried Tab, approaching closer, and taking his hand, which she squeezed affectionately; 'can't you guess?'

" 'I have *not* an idea,' said Naaman, returning the pressure, and looking excited.

" 'Why who can be a more properer person than she as has brought up your blessed beautyus babe, ever sunce it left its blessed mother's bussum?'

" 'I *have* an idea—it's you yourself, Tab,' exclaimed Naaman; 'come to my arms!'

" 'Tab, like an obedient domestic, did as she was bidden, and received an exuberant Chaldaic embrace with great gratitude.

" 'The following Sunday the rector himself published the bans of marriage between 'Naaman Nightshade, widower, and Tabitha

Crumpley, spinster, both of the parish of Neitherside ; ' and as no just cause or impediment could be found against the proposal, they were united, and Mrs. Nightshade in the course of three years gave birth to three very fine boys.

"Though the marriage lowered Naaman in the eyes of his lady neighbours, who were looking out for him, for themselves, or their daughters, he did not care. Tabitha made him an excellent wife and servant, looked after his little comforts, and prevented every little *contre-temps* that might have occurred from his eccentricities. She never disturbed him in his studies, and filled and lighted his pipe for him at his accustomed hours.

"These virtues, for in that light Naaman beheld them, made Tab, as he still fondly called her, appear an earthly angel in his eyes ; to her he intrusted every thing—except the education of his children, which she wisely refused to undertake.

"The girl, now nearly seventeen years of age—I speak of the time when I arrived at the rectory—was still at a boarding-school. The boys were with Dr. Bright at Oldeton, who, finding they showed more talent than is usually found in boys of their ages, had advised their father to send them to Elton, as better calculated to bring them into notice, than a quiet, unpretending free-school.

"I must now account for the very warm and cool reception I met with on my arrival.

"Several robberies had been planned and executed in the neighbourhood of Neitherside by a daring gang, who were said to be under the command of a young man of good family, who had run through a great deal of money, got deeply in debt, and been turned out of doors by his father, who had been nearly ruined by his extravagance.

"The rector who was not very courageous, had had his fears heightened to such a degree by his wife, whose favourite studies were the 'Lives of Highwaymen,' the 'Newgate Calendar,' and 'Jonathan Wild,' that he determined to barricade his house so effectually day and night, that Captain Flint-and-Steel—so the leader of the gang was called—with all his men, should find it no easy matter to invade it.

"It happened, unfortunately for me, that the captain's dress was described in the 'Hue and Cry, as consisting of a green cut-away coat, with metal buttons, a buff waistcoat, white duck trousers, and a white hat. He was also said to ride a thorough-bred pony.

"Now Mrs. Nightshade, when she arose from the brocoli-bed, and saw me standing at the gate in the identical dress, (which I have described as being considered objectionable by Dr. Doonuffin on my arrival at Acorn House), and holding a bay pony by the bridle, fancied that I was Captain Flint-and-steel *in propria* come

to break in and steal. She accordingly told her timid husband that 'one of the most blood-thirsty, ill-looking, gentlemanly villains, as she ever clapped her blessed eyes on, was a standing outside, and threatening to eat her and her master up piecemeal.'

"The rector immediately barred the back-door, and reconnoitred me through the keyhole of the front-door, and, when he saw me scale the gate, in spite of his tenterhooks, was assured his wife's suspicions were just. He got his pistols, meaning to frighten me if I attempted to get in at the window; but his nervousness was so great when he saw my head above the shutter, that the pistol went off, and alarmed him quite as much, and perhaps more, than it did me.

"My sudden descent from my dangerous situation made him fancy he had shot me and become a murderer, and, when he saw me alive and well, peeping round the corner of the stable, he had no doubt that I was lying in ambush, waiting for an opportunity of returning his fire; an idea in which his wife confirmed him, by quoting many passages from her favourite authors, wherein were detailed sanguinary instances of deep and determined revenge.

"'Tab, my dear,' said the rector, after he had read my testimonials, 'Mr. Smyth will dine with us.'

"'Goodness gracious! oh!' replied the lady. 'I'm really quite ashamed to set him down to one fowl.'

"I begged she would not say any thing more in the way of apology: but Naaman, pulling up his stock with an habitual jerk, said,

"'I've an idea—kill another.'

"But Mrs. Nightshade had disappeared before this villanous order could reach her ears.

"During the interval which Mrs. Nightshade employed in 'knocking up a bit of dinner,' an arrangement was made between the rector and myself, in which it was settled that I should have the use of the gardener's cottage for myself and the boys, with James Jobs to wait upon us. We were to have our meals at the rectory, to prevent the necessity of a second *cuisine*, and, what he dreaded much, a second female about the premises.

"In addition to a very liberal salary, he offered me his valuable services in preparing me for ordination. Thus I was, as the masons say, 'comfortably tiled in,' and began to fancy that Fortune was tired of kicking me so viciously as she had done lately. Scarcely, however, had I taken possession of my humble cot, and assisted James in arranging my books on their shelves, when a letter was brought me, saying that my poor mother was dangerously ill.

"I hastened to my uncle's house, and found her dying—at least, so dangerously ill with dropsy on the chest, that the medical atten-



dant gave no hopes of her recovery, and intimated that suffocation might carry her off without a minute's warning.

"I attended her incessantly for a fortnight, never leaving her bedside for above five minutes at a time, a confinement for which I was rewarded by her gratitude, and an opportunity of examining my thoughts and feelings, which went far to reconcile me to entering the church.

"After her burial I returned to Neitherside, and commenced operations with my pupils, whom I found extremely docile and gentlemanly, and so far advanced in their classics, that I confess I was obliged to 'read up' to keep a-head of them.

"I trust they profited more by my cramming them, than I did by their father cramming me; for, though his will was good, his long-indulged habits defeated his intentions. As soon as the boys were in bed, I used to go up to the rectory, taking with me my testament and bible, with passages marked which I wished expounded. Let the subject be what it would, geographical, historical, or theological, in a few minutes Naaman would exclaim, 'I've an idea,' and go off at score into the profundities of oriental literature, sending me away at eleven o'clock just as wise as I came, but with a promise, which I need not say was broken, to attend to my particular questions on the following evening.

"Six months passed—six happy months—for my mind and body were constantly engaged, and I had nought to trouble me. My mornings were passed with my pupils, my spare time in shooting and fishing, for which the neighbourhood afforded great facilities. In the evening I read again, and smoked my cigar with the rector, while he lectured on Chaldaic and Hebrew.

"Winter came, and with it a letter from the rector's daughter, whose existence I believe he had forgotten, for he had not seen her for four years. It contained a request that she might be allowed to return to her home, as her education was now finished, and she was anxious to see her father and brothers.

"Tabitha, who foresaw an infringement of some of her rights and privileges, and visions of a lady's-maid, an animal towards whom she entertained a decided aversion, was not very ready to grant her young step-daughter a favourable answer, and hinted that she thought another year's 'Talian and moosuck' would be advisable; but Naaman 'had an idea' that his little girl—for such she was still in his mind's eye—was justly entitled to her share of the nice pies and puddings which Tabitha made for her brothers. He wrote, therefore, and fixed a day for her return from Kensington by the coach to Oldeton, where some one was to meet her, and accompany her to Neitherside in a 'yellow postshay.'

"I had for some time expressed a wish to go over, see old Fidel, and offer my thanks to Dr. Bright for having placed me in so plea-

sant a situation. The rector rather annoyed me by suggesting that I could walk over and return with his 'little girl' in the chaise. I say annoyed, because never having seen the original Mrs. Nightshade, the mother of Lucy, I could not divest myself of the notion, that she must have resembled the kind-hearted, but vulgar Tabitha, and that Lucy was a juvenile individual of the same species. I, however, consented to the arrangement, though I did not much like it. After dining with old Fidel, I went to the inn to await the arrival of the coach, which was still driven by my old friend and companion, Tom Whipcord, and called the Sovereign-day.

"He arrived punctually to his time—with the short reins ready unbuckled, which he threw down to Jem the ostler, and told him to order out 'a yeller' directly. As soon as he had descended, he shook me by the hand and said,

" 'Ah! Mr. Samivel—how's yer person?' and then winking in a very peculiar way to the coach-window, whispered, 'My eyes!—there's sich a hangel hinside—took her up at Kensington, with sich a heap o' luggage, and an arp, or a geetar, or a pi-any-forty, or summit o' that natur! I was hobligated for to ave a pair of leaders hover the ills.'

"This was my bird, of course—so I opened the coach-door, and as there were two young women inside, both closely veiled, I inquired which was Miss Nightshade. A very sweet voice replied, 'I am, sir; pray is my father's servant here to meet me?'

"The bustling hostess, in assisting her to alight, informed her that 'the chaise was ordered, and that that gentleman,' meaning me, 'the family tutorer, was to accompany her home;' a piece of information that seemed to surprise her, and cause her to examine my looks a little more closely than she had done by the light of the coach-lamps and the ostler's lantern.

"As soon as the luggage was strapped on to the chaise, and Jem pronounced it 'all right and tight,' the 'first turn' was ordered out, and I went into the parlour to announce the fact to Miss Lucy. Judge of my surprise, Bursar, when, on entering the comfortable and well-lit parlour, I found one of the most lovely girls I had ever seen. She was rather above the middle height, and a little inclined to the *embonpoint*. Her face was nearly oval, her eyes very dark, though not black, and her complexion somewhat pale; but it might have appeared so either from fatigue, or from the profusion of dark auburn hair, which fell in ringlets beside it.

"She smiled—I thought rather maliciously, and inquired, if I thought it prudent in a young lady, who had just left boarding-school, to trust herself for seven miles in a chaise with a young gentleman, though he was a 'tutorer' in her father's family?

"The clever way in which she mimicked the hostess's 'tutorer' amused me, and I smilingly assured her, that, as it was by her

father's express desire that the enviable opportunity of escorting her home had been given me, there could be no impropriety in my doing so.

"She gave me a look of very peculiar meaning, that led me to fancy that my infernal green cutaway and buff waistcoat, which I resolved to discard from that hour, gave me rather too knowing an appearance for the protector of one so young and fair. She merely said, that she had no doubt her father 'had an idea'—and she imitated his manner admirably—that she was still a little child, or he would not have left her to the protection of such a *gay* young gentleman as myself.

"During our journey home, which seemed to me shorter by at least six miles than it really was, our discourse, for I cannot call it conversation, was upon the well-worn subject, the weather—until all on a sudden she threw herself back in the carriage and burst out into a fit of uncontrolled laughter, which made me feel very unhappy in my mind, for I began to think she was laughing at me. When she had nearly recovered, I ventured to 'hope she was amused.'

" 'I am exceedingly,' she replied. 'I was laughing at the idea of my prim governess, who always spoke of young men as if they were devouring monsters, seeing you and me shut up together in a hack-chaise, on a deserted road, in a dark night. I think I see her horror at this moment;' and again she indulged in a hearty laugh.

"The ice being thus broken, our conversation became animated, and I found her exceedingly well-informed on most of the subjects on which we touched, but with talents for satire and mimicry, which, if indulged in without restraint, would render her most cordially detested—by her own sex, at any rate.

"Had she seen any thing of the world, beyond the regions of Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens, she would have been probably more reserved in her manner towards a perfect stranger like myself; but she was completely a child of nature, and love of fun and glee was the only passion that as yet reigned in her heart. Her flow of spirits roused me, and I amused her very much by an account of my reception on my first visit to the rectory. She proposed having a little fun with her 'dear sunny father,' to which I of course consented. The plan was laid, and when the chaise drew up to the parsonage gate, and Naaman came out to greet his 'little girl,' she collected her clothes around her, and shortening her height by half kneeling, *à la* Matthews, confirmed him in the idea that she was still the little child he thought her, and turning round to me, he requested me to lift the little dear in, as the path was very sloppy. To this she was too cunning to assent, but tripped before us, still stooping in a way that threw me into convulsions. On entering the parlour, she drew herself up to her full height, and draw-

ing back her veil, threw herself into her father's arms. Naaman was too much surprised to return her affectionate embrace, and holding her out at arm's length, with one hand, and putting on his spectacles with the other, after surveying her for five minutes, exclaimed, 'I've an idea—you're grown a woman! Mr. Smyth, I've an idea—it was very improper.'

"Lucy assured him I was a 'very steady young man, and had behaved with the greatest propriety;' which made me feel very oddly again—though I was afterwards convinced her words were not meant to convey any covert meaning.

"Tabitha, I thought, was not quite pleased at the grown-up beauty of her step-daughter, but behaved very civilly and attentively to her; the more so, perhaps, because she came unattended by a lady's-maid. Her kind inquiries about the journey, and the fatigue of travelling, were cut short by Naaman, who 'had an idea' that a little supper would be more agreeable to his child than all Tab's kind interrogatories. Supper was accordingly served, and I retired to my cottage to dream of Lucy Nightshade.

"For a week or two, I confess, I rather disliked what I saw of Lucy's character; I certainly feared her—she was so very satirical. She made a great many—to her, no doubt—amusing remarks on my substituting a sober suit of sables for my green cutaway and white elceteras; and by her method of reading her brother's English exercises, with which I had taken great pains, made them appear the greatest nonsense that could be conceived.

"Her father, instead of checking her, encouraged her remarks, as he 'had an idea' that it showed her talents, and amused me. I began to feel really uncomfortable, and avoided the rectory under one excuse or another as much as I could; but this plan was soon frustrated, for she induced Naaman to come to the cottage two or three times a-day, to see that we were all comfortable, and to get flowers for her bouquets.

"In a month's time she appeared completely changed, and treated me with a degree of reserve for which I could not account. Instead of avoiding her, I paid her every attention in my power; my gun and fishing-rod were thrown aside, and my leisure hours passed in walking with or reading to her. Need I say to what this led? I fell in love, of course—how could I avoid it? I never owned my love, yet I felt that she knew the state of my feelings, and almost dared to think, returned them.

"One evening, as I was sitting with her and her father, who was smoking his pipe, whilst I was reading aloud a play of Shakespeare, Naaman, sending forth a cloud which nearly smothered us, exclaimed, 'I've an idea!' I lowered my book to listen to the 'idea,' and Naaman, after looking first at Lucy, and then at me, said,

“ ‘I see it all—you love one another.’

“ ‘Poor Lucy blushed, of course, and saying, ‘What a very odd man!’ rushed out of the room.

“ ‘An explanation ensued, and I confessed that I was strongly attached to Lucy, but had not informed her of my attachment, as I felt that my circumstances were not in so flourishing a condition as to justify me in asking her hand.

“ ‘ ‘I’ve an idea—you’re a very honourable young man. I’ve planned it all—I’ve an idea—that I make myself rather ridiculous in the pulpit. I’ll resign it to you.’

“ ‘This was perfectly true, as, of late, his absence of mind had increased so much, that he made many mistakes during the service, and sometimes forgot so entirely what he was about, that the clerk was obliged to remind him that he was in church, and point out to him where to go on.

“ ‘ ‘I’ve an idea!’ he continued; ‘the boys shall be sent to Eton—you shall be ordained on this curacy—the stipend, and Lucy’s fortune, which she inherits from her mother, will be enough for all your wants. Tab and I will resign the rectory to you, and retire to the cottage—you shall be married, and be very happy.’

“ ‘I reminded him that it was necessary to have Lucy’s consent to this arrangement; and he replied,

“ ‘ ‘I’ve an idea!—I never thought of that—but I’ll go and sound her.’

“ ‘He left me in a very unpleasant state of suspense, and returned in a few minutes, leading in Lucy, and exclaiming,

“ ‘ ‘I’ve an idea!—she consents—take her—she’s yours!’ And while I was enacting the usuals upon such occasions with Lucy, he amused himself by making sundry pirouettes and figures, that would have done credit to an opera-dancer, and which would, probably, have been prolonged, had not Tabitha entered, and seizing him by his coat-tail, pinned him, or rather pinioned him, to his chair.

“ ‘As our road to matrimony was Macadamised, and free from ruts and obstructions, I will not dwell upon the events of our courtship, but will merely say, that every arrangement was completed; and conclude my adventures, by detailing the circumstance that blighted my fair prospects for ever, and left me the miserable nervous creature that I am.

“ ‘About a week before my ordination, and after I had passed the usual examination before the bishop’s chaplain, I proposed to my betrothed to visit some hills in the neighbourhood, which were much resorted to by picnic parties, on account of the picturesqueness of the scenery in the vicinity, and the extent of the views from their summits.

“ It was a fine day in the month of May ; indeed the sky was cloudless, and the sun’s rays more scorching than they generally are at that early season of the year. I walked by the side of Lucy, who was riding on a pony that I had purchased for her. The ascent of the hills I found exceedingly fatiguing, and was really wearied when I reached the top.

“ I had sent James on before us with a basket of refreshments, with which he was to await our arrival in a small circular stone building, which the lord of the manor had kindly erected for the use of the numerous parties that visited the hills.

“ After resting a while, and refreshing ourselves, we left the pony in charge of James, and proceeded to the different points whence the finest prospects could be obtained. So entirely were we occupied in gazing at the views, and expressing our sentiments upon the loveliness of nature around us, that we did not notice the extraordinary change that had taken place in the appearance of the sky, until reminded of it by James, who brought the pony, and begged of Lucy to mount and ride back to the roundhouse as quickly as possible, as he dreaded the approach of a storm. She mounted, and we ran by her side ; but before we could reach our place of shelter, a few large drops of rain, and the rumbling of distant thunder, proved that my servant’s prognostics were right.

“ The heavens seemed to be covered with a dark gray curtain, except in two spots, which appeared nearly black, and from each of these, which seemed hurrying on to meet as enemies in dread encounter—frequent flashes of forked lightning gleamed. As soon as I had placed Lucy within the building, I could not resist the desire I felt to view the extraordinary look of these two hostile clouds. I placed myself, in spite of the warnings of James and Lucy, under the projecting eaves of the roof, which was formed of some metallic substance. On, on came the dark masses, looking darker as they neared each other. At last they met, and one of the most awful flashes of lightning I had ever witnessed ensued, followed by a clap of thunder, such as one seldom hears in this climate. A second and a third followed in rapid succession, and, ere I could reach the door of the building, a fourth flash felled me to the ground, where I lay stunned, and recovered only to see James standing over the lifeless bodies of Lucy and the horse. The house was roofless—the lightning had melted the metal, and rent the walls asunder.

“ What ensued for some weeks I know not. James must explain all to you. When I was restored—partially at least—to health, I resolved to leave my kind friend, the rector, and the scene of my frustrated happiness. He was much hurt at my leaving him in his bereavement, but I *could* not stay—I should have gone mad if I had done so. Fortunately I saw an advertisement in the paper of a

title to be obtained at Trevenny, in Cornwall, which I resolved to accept. I went down with James, and, after an interview with Messrs. Nibson and Inkspot, accepted their terms—niggardly as they were—and settled down as curate in a part of the island, where nothing could remind me of my lost happiness.

“And now, Bursar, farewell! should this ever meet your eye, preserve a friendly remembrance of your old friend, Sam Smyth.”

“I am rather glad that is over,” said the Dean, yawning outrageously; “we college fellows ought not to have our sympathies over-excited. Peter, we will try your mixture, which the undergraduates call by an indecent name—make us a jug of egg-flip.”

“Excuse me,” said the Bursar, “but as term is not over for the next month, I shall not venture upon *that*. Peter, bring *me* a glass of cold without, as usual.”

However, eventually I made egg-flip for *four*, for which Mrs. P. commended me highly.

## CHAPTER IX.

“ULLO! Mr. Rakestraw,” said my youngest boy, about two o’clock one morning, to the corpulent and civil landlord of the Shirt and Shotbag, “his father ere?” for he has the Oxford trick of exasperating his vowels and depriving his aspirates of their natural rights.

“Yes, Master Nic, he be.”

“Where be’e, then?” inquired Nicomedes, which name the parson gave him by mistake for Nicodemus.

“Up stairs in the lodge-room—the Apollo—No. 2, first door to the left,” replied the landlord; “but you must not go in—you arn’t an Odd Fellow.”

“A Hodd Feller,” cried Nic, scratching his head and looking bewildered, “what’s that? hallays thought father ha rummy hold cove, but hi never know’d has ’e was a hodd feller.”

Mr. Rakestraw scratched *his* head and looked quite as bewildered as little Nic, for, though he had kept a lodge for some years, he had never been called upon to explain the nature of odd-fellowship before. The *scalptus digitorum* elicited this very satisfactory elucidation.

“Why you see, Nic, the Odd Fellows is a set of werry nice men, as comes here once a month and drinks and smokes, and spends their money like gen’lemen. They knows one another a thousand miles off, and if one on ’em gits in a scrape the tothers

gits him out on't. And they has officers and sich like, and banners and collars and all manner, and never tells their wives nuffin as they does—that's an odd fellow, Nic."

"Well! hi never!—no never!" replied Nic. "And so father's one of them here sort, is 'e? Blowed hif hi don't go and tell mother."

"Yes he is, you young tell-tale—he's 'Most Noble Grand' this werry evening, and is on the throne this werry moment, lectering on the science, and if you go to split to your mother, he'll split your head, and richly you desarnes it, you young wusbird."

"Well, then," said Nic, "hi vunt—hif—"

"If what?"

"Why, hif you'll stand a glass of peppermint and gin."

The landlord, willing to ensure the secrecy so valuable to the interests of the craft, *gave* him a glass of his favourite cordial, and chalked it up to me.

"Now," said Nic, licking his lips and draining the very last drop from the glass, "just you step hup to the hold boy and tell him as ow Mr. Downe and Mr. Tripes as tumbled hout of the cart, hand his very nigh dead—hat least hunsensible, and as sent for im to come to 'em directly."

"Bless my soul!" cried Rakestraw, alarmed. "Why didn't you say so afore?"

"Why, ow could hi, hi should like to know, when you was a cramming me with hodd fellers and peppermint?"

The landlord lost this very proper reply, for he had run up stairs as fast as his rotundity would allow him, and entered the lodge pale with his unwonted exertions, and the seriousness of the news he had to convey.

"Most—Noble—Priggins."

"A fine—a fine," from the brethren.

"Most—Noble—Grand! beg pardon—but—boy—Nic—at the door—two—masters—killed from a—tandem—dead and sent—for you," panted forth the landlord.

I sprung from my throne, divested myself of the insignia of my office, and was preparing to obey the dead men's orders, when Dusterly, who is our secretary and foreign correspondent, held me back, saying—

"Wait ha hinstant—I want to put ha himportant hinqury. Brother Rakestraw, ow's the osses? hare *they* urt?"

"Don't know—I'm—sure."

"Then what a hass you hare," replied brother Dusterly.

I burst from him and ran down to college as fast as I could, and found my boy Jem making two stiff glasses of brandy-and-water for the dead men, who were scolding him for being so long about it, and sponging their faces, which were covered with blood and dirt, with a couple of clean fine holland shirts, which they had



taken from the drawers of Mr. Solomon Stingo, into whose rooms they had bolted in preference to their own, as they were covered with mud, and Solomon was particular about his furniture, and did not like *his* liquors to be consumed.

I turned Jem out of the room, finished compounding the grog, and inquired the cause of their accident.

Just as I put the question, Mr. Wydeawake entered the room with Mr. Stingo, who looked three-parts drunk, and the other part disgusted at the coolness of his friends' drinking his hot brandy-and-water, and converting his undergarments—which cost twenty-four shillings each, as he informed them—into towels.

"Well," said he, "this *is* cool, however!"

"Is it, old fellow?" replied Mr. Tripes, sipping his grog and blowing it. "I'm convinced it's hot—scalding hot! Peter, put a little cold water to it and another dash of brandy; I hate nibbling at a glass, I want a *swig*," which is pure Carthusian for a draught.

"Peter!" said Mr. Wydeawake, "in the closet in Mr. Stingo's bedroom you'll find some excellent whiskey; bring a bottle of it and a lemon, and make a jug of toddy."

"I say though," interrupted Mr. Solomon, "you might just as well have been civil enough to ask *my* leave."

"Oh, bother about that, Stingy—I beg pardon—Stingo, I mean," replied Mr. Tripes, "out with the liquid, Peter, unkennel the bottle, and we'll begin the evening."

I obeyed of course, and, when the toddy was made, Mr. Solomon thought he might as well have his share of his own whiskey, but Mr. Tripes stood sentry over it with the hearth-broom, and swore he should not have a taste, unless he drank off one bottle of his worthy father's best brown stout to clear his palate first.

Solomon, it will be recollected, hated the very mention of malt-liquor in conjunction with the name of his respectable and justly-noted governor. He looked as if he would have killed his enemy if he dared; but, knowing Mr. Tripes's determined character, he quietly absorbed his bottle of stout, and was then allowed to sit down to the toddy, or, rather, the toddy-jug, for the trio had already emptied it.

"Peter," said Mr. Richard Downe, "Peter, Mr. Solomon has no toddy."

"Make him some directly, sir," cried Tripes.

"I say though," again interrupted Mr. Stingo, "you might as well—"

"Peter," cried out Mr. Wydeawake, "you may as well make three bottles at once; here's lots of hot water."

"I say though—"

"And, Peter," exclaimed Mr. Tripes, flourishing his hearth-

broom significantly, "let us have a dash of curaçoa in it—you'll find a bottle under the bed."

"I say though—I won't stand *that*," said Mr. Stingo.

"You shan't, my dear fellow," replied Tripes, and down he knocked him by a well-directed blow of the hearth-brush.

"Now Solomon," cried Mr. Wydeawake, "shew yourself a man!"

He seemed inclined to do so, as he actually doubled his fist, but unclosed it again when he saw Mr. Tripes, who was just in his glory preparing to clear for action by taking off his coat, and contented himself by articulating fiercely

"You shall hear from me to-morrow morning."

"All right, old fellow," said his opponent, putting on his coat again. "Peter! cigars! they are stowed away in his hatbox upon the bedtop."

Solomon made no remark, but looked unutterables, and helped himself to a large tumbler of toddy, which he would have enjoyed very much had not his hand been so unsteady from previous drinking, or from Mr. Tripes jogging his elbow, that he poured the contents outside instead of inside his neckcloth, and scalded himself unmercifully.

"Never mind, old fellow, better luck next time. I'll hold your hand," said Mr. Downe, filling his glass and administering the whole at one gulp as successfully as if he had been drenching a horse.

Solomon sat perfectly still for five minutes, watching them lighting *his* cigars. Then his eyes began to look glazy, and the colour left his face. This paleness was succeeded by a hiccuppy sort of convulsion of his whole frame, and a short bobbing backwards and forwards of his upper person, and a frequent shuffling change of the position of his feet.

"Look out for squalls," cried Mr. Tripes.

"Peter, put that beast to bed," said Mr. Wydeawake.

"Take all the cold water away," continued Mr. Downe, "and empty a bottle of his governor's porter into his ewer."

The former order I in mercy obeyed, but not the latter; and, though Mr. Solomon resisted, I succeeded in undressing him, and having put all things in the order requisite upon such occasions, locked him in and put the key in my pocket; as I knew that if access could be obtained to him, he would very soon be lugged out again, and drenched with water first, and cork-and-candle-greased afterwards.

While pretending to put things in order, which was merely an excuse to stay in the room, I listened to a garbled account of the adventures of the evening, but on the following day I heard Mr. Wydeawake describe the whole affair at a wine-party, and, as well as I can recollect it, will tell it in his own words.

"So Dick and Tripes were nearly being rusticated this morning," observed some one.

"As near as a toucher," replied Tripes, "and we've got an imposition that will bring Chops, the barber, five pounds very easy, and are confined to college, after nine, for the rest of the term."

"What was it for?"

"Only for tandemizing."

"Not exactly," said Mr. Wydeawake, "but I'll tell you the whole story.

"You must know that we made up our minds to go over and see the

#### ABINGDON THEATRICALS,

because old Chatly—now tobacconist and snuff-seller, but formerly a first-rater at old Drury, especially in French characters—had consented, at my especial request, to perform *M. Morbleu*, which he played in London for fifty successive nights.

"I promised Jackman, the manager, whom I knew from his having played in our part of the country, to make up a party and get him a good house. He is a very industrious man, and keeps a large family just above starvation point by his unremitting exertions. Old Chatly was looked up to by him as a star, so I invited him to meet him in my rooms, and after warming them with wine, left them for ten minutes to settle pecuniaries; and I believe it was arranged that they were to divide the profits between them, the 'Lion,' of course, having the best share, as Jackman had to pay the other performers as usual.

"I offered to drive Chatly over in a buggy, but he declined, under the pretence of having his dresses to take over—as he was to play *Sir Anthony Absolute* as well as *Morbleu*. His real reason for declining my offer—for there was plenty of room for his wardrobe under the buggy—was that he had vowed never to ride in a gig again, because one of his town friends had capsized him about six weeks before; and he fell so heavily on a conspicuous part of his person, that his 'sederunts' were any thing but agreeable for a month afterwards. He went over on the Southampton with Beyzand, in the morning, having to attend a rehearsal, and to drill the rustic actors in the 'little business' of each scene.

"Dick Downe wanted me to join him in a team, but I declined; for though I have no doubt of his capabilities as a Jehu, yet accidents will happen; and I have a great respect for my personal appearance, and a horror of crutches; nor do I think a man looks the handsomer for having his nose dislocated, and his eye covered over with 'a green veranda.'

"Dick found a victim in Tripes, who cares for nothing, so that he can get his beer; and, as there is no public between Oxford and

Abingdon, he thought the quicker the journey was done the better. Dick procured his old favourites—Woodpecker and old Peter ; for Kickum can deny him nothing, they are on such *very* intimate terms. He *teas*, I believe, with Mrs. Kickum six nights out of seven, and plays at ‘hunt the slipper’ with the girls.”

Dick energetically denied the fact, and threw an orange at his slanderer’s head, which missed him, and nearly knocked Mr. Stingo’s right eye out.

“I believe,” continued Mr. Wydeawake, “that they got safely to Abingdon, though Dick Whiting, the carrier, said he was forced to lead the leaders round the turnings, which are certainly very awkward.”

“What an infernal liar !” in a parenthesis, from Mr. Downe.

“I was determined to go over in a fly with my liberal friend Solomon, who always volunteers pikes, and Tom Springer, the M. A., who, as usual, wanted to walk, or row down and bathe on the way, though the ice is an inch thick. He sulked for five minutes at my declining to be metamorphosed into an icicle to oblige him, but his good nature returned when I promised to take a forty-mile constitutional with him another day. Little Rooke made up a fourth, and away we went with old Scuffledust’s mules at a very good pace. The rest of our party went some in buggies, some on horseback—and we met, as per agreement, at the Crown and Thistle, which you will all acknowledge to be one of the very best inns in England.

“The worthy and excellent landlord rushed out of his little bar as the fly entered the gate-way, and called out ‘attention,’ as usual, which brought out two waiters, a brace of chamber-maids, four postboys, boots, George Blunt, the hostler, and a very fine boy, his son—remarkably like his father.

“‘Shew these gentlemen into No. 4,’ said our host ; ‘and George, take that bull-dog,’ for Solomon had got little Snap with him, ‘and tie him up in the stable.’

“‘Here, Bill,’ replied George, ‘I shan’t have my fingers bitten, nor my stables dirtied.—You take and tie him up with the posters—the gen’lemen will give you sixpence, I dare say, and you wants it worser nor me.’

“Solomon wanted to save sixpence by tying her up himself, but George told him ‘he did not consider as he was behaving like a gen’leman,’ which settled the point.

“Our host, like other great men, has his little peculiarities—one of them is a peculiarly merry laugh, which would break the heart of a melancholy tee-totaller, and a peculiar way of telling a good story, singing a comic song, and giving imitations of remarkable characters. Another is a very peculiar cut coat, which always fits too much or too little—his tailor evidently wishing to ‘give him a

wrinkle' or two with every fresh garment; but his great peculiarity is, that he has not a bottle of bad wine in his cellar, *Credat Judæus!* It's a fact.

"Soon after us arrived the tandem, and, of course, Dick's first inquiry was, who drove the mail, the Defiance, and the other coaches which run through the town; and the next, the residences of their respective wives and families, to which George Blunt answered, 'I neither knows nor cares.'

"The rest of the party dropped in by degrees, and although we had dined at five, and it was now only seven, it was thought requisite to have some refreshment. Anchovy toasts, devilled biscuits, mutton chops, kidneys, and grilled chickens, were ordered, and the cook to his (for he is a dog-cook), great disgust, was summoned to the kitchen from his beer and tobacco at the tap. These, with sundry glasses of warm with, and cold without, huge pitchers of XXX, and tankards of cold swizzle, proved so good, that it was carried *nem. con.* to have a second edition of them after the play, and invite old Chatty and Jack Greatman to partake.

"Most of you know Jack, because you have heard him sing, do a bit of ventriloquism, and imitate the French-horn, keyed bugle, and all sorts of music in my rooms. His history is a curious, but by no means an uncommon one. His father was a highly respectable tradesman, and gave Jack a good education; but, before he could apprentice him to any business, misfortunes came upon him in rapid succession, and Jack, having nothing to do, hired a buggy, and a servant with a livery-coat, and a hat with a gold band round it, and went over to France, where he had a capital lark; and after he had spent all his money, and *spouted* the trap and horse to raise the necessary, returned to find the old man a bankrupt, and himself penniless.

"He might have got work if he had wished, but he did not; he entertained very gentlemanly notions about the respectability of doing nothing.

'Beatus ille, qui procul negotiis,'

was his motto. He lived for some time on the good-nature and hospitality of his relations and friends in the neighbourhood, and having plenty of leisure for practice, became a tolerable proficient in the arts of singing, and those other accomplishments, for which he is so justly celebrated.

"When his friends began to think that a song, however well sung, and a story, however well told, were but a poor recompence for sundry slices of beef, mutton, or pork, with vegetables and bread to match—not to mention quarts of ale and glasses of grog—for Jack was always what he calls a 'wet un,' they gave him very plain hints that he must look out for a cupboard of his own. This

was a puzzler. Jack looked about him, and saw no prospect of a cupboard, or of any thing to put into it, if he were possessed of it. He tried to think for what he was fitted. The law! He did not like the idea of being nailed to a desk, copying musty deeds and parchments, and being obliged to work by folios, like a stone-breaker on the road, who is paid by bushels—he wanted to work ‘by the day.’ Divinity! He had been bred up a dissenter—a baptist; and he thought, as he said, he ‘could come it as strong as the minister,’ and made an experiment before a looking-glass, but burst out into so loud a laugh at the sight of his funny face, as convinced him that that was ‘no go!’ Physic? It was dirty work—and what was worse, it was *night* work; and after nine Jack was generally headman in a public; president, or vice, of the Harmonic Society; and before twelve, drunk, or very near it. ‘No go’ again.

“But amongst the company, the Harmonics, was an apothecary who wanted an assistant, and he thought Jack would just suit him. He agreed to take him without a premium, upon condition that he was to keep sober whenever his master was drunk, and *vice versa*. Jack pounded away at the mortar, and sung over his work, and thought himself established for life; but, after a fortnight, he told his employer he could not stand it any longer.

“‘Why not, my dear Jack?’ inquired the doctor.

“‘You recollect our agreement, master?’

“‘Perfectly.’

“‘Well, then, I’ve been with you fourteen days, and you have not given me a chance yet. I can’t stand it, and won’t.’

“Master stayed at home and got drunk that night, and Jack had his turn, which he kept up for a week, when master interfered, and he was obliged to yield. How long, by the ‘bucket’ system, they might have gone on together, it is impossible to say, but a little event occurred that compelled them to part.

“Jack’s master had a patient about a mile from the town, in a retired part of a village. As there was nothing to be done in ‘the surgery,’ and when that was the case, mischief was sure to ensue, he thought the best thing he could do would be to take Jack with him. They went to the cottage, and master went up stairs to his patient, leaving Jack below with half a dozen old women, who usually congregated in the house of death or illness.

“Jack never could be quiet, and recollecting that he had some thoughts of turning preacher, thought a favourable opportunity was before him to try his powers on the congregation assembled. The noise he made was so tremendous, that the old women rushed out of the house, and the patient, who had been listening to him through the crevices in the floor, went off in a swoon, which the doctor mistook for death. He ran down stairs, and found Jack rolling on the floor in convulsions of laughter, which he undertook to cure by

thrashing him soundly with a flail which stood conveniently in the corner.

"Jack could not brook this—no gentleman could—so he gave warning, and cut physic and his master for ever.

"Soon after this he luckily met with a country squire, of the Tony Lumpkin breed, with more money than brains, and with *him* he lived, until he was turned out of doors to make room for a squiress, to whom, the squire thought, he might communicate some secrets that were better untold.

"After many adventures, which, with one exception, I will not record, he has gone on ever since, sometimes flourishing, but generally dependent on his wife's exertions, who gains a scanty livelihood by dress-making.

"The tale I mean to tell is this :—There is a gardener in Abingdon—a regular *character*. He was missing from his native town for many years, and what had become of him no one could tell—nor can they now say for certain how he was employed during his absence. When he returned, he proved himself an adept in the arts of conjuring, pricking in the garter, thimble-rig, eating fire, and other such sciences as the frequenters of fairs and races are wont to practise.

"‘Knowing Jemmy,’ as he was called, entered into a treaty, offensive and defensive, with Jack Greatman, and undertook to teach him his profession, which was more suited to his inclinations than either of the three that are designated the ‘learned,’ *par excellence*.

"Jack soon acquired sufficient skill to make a very good confederate, and it was resolved that the first exhibition of the partners should take place at Tubney fair, about four miles from home. A few yards of canvass, an old deal table, and a green baize cloth were hired, and a barrel of strong beer procured on trust, with the understanding that the cask was to be returned with the money on the following day.

"The tent was erected—the table, with its green baize, covered with the instruments of art, and packs of rather dirty cards. The barrel was broached, tasted, and pronounced to be excellent. Jack stationed himself outside, dressed in a kind of Chinese costume; and after crying out, in sonorous tones, ‘Walk in, gentlemen and ladies, walk in, and behold the wonderful, astonishing, miraculous, never-before-seen-in-any-other-part-of-the-world conjurer—the Emperor Rum-fum-qui, who not only *displays* the wonderful secrets of his art, but gives you half-a-pint of *strong* beer into the bargain, and all for the small charge of one shilling—children and workey people *half* price.’ He sounded a very clear French-horn note or two through his fist, and introduced the assembled crowd to Jemmy, who was dressed as conjurers used to be represented,

with a long beard, a pair of spectacles, and a black cap, a long black robe, marked with hieroglyphics, a black wand in his left hand, and a (stuffed) black cat on his right shoulder.

“ Their success exceeded their warmest expectations, and Jack, who was money-taker, had his pockets full of silver and halfpence. The barrel was beginning to sound rather hollow, and as Jemmy was fatigued by his exertions, the canvass curtain was dropped, and the company informed, that the performances would recommence as soon as the Emperor Rum-fum-qui had eaten his imperial meal—which consisted of two red herrings—‘sojers,’ as he called them, *sericè*, I presume—a bunch of inions, and a tuppenny buster? Jack despised such humble fare, and went to a stand, and had threepen’orth of ‘sassiges,’ standing. When he returned, he found his master pulling away at the beer-cup, as he thought, very unfairly. A laudable spirit of rivalry was excited, and each endeavoured to get a better share than the other. The consequence was, that both of them got very tipsy; and when the company returned, Jack could not stand, but sat on the empty barrel, taking the money and laughing, ready to kill himself. Jemmy tried his old tricks, but his eye and hand both failed him; he burnt his mouth with the hot tow—pulled out a front tooth, instead of the fifty yards of tape—lost his peas under the table—turned up the wrong card every time; and, in trying to play with the three balls, tumbled backwards off his throne, perfectly insensible to the kicks and cuffs that were mercilessly bestowed upon him by the angry crowd, who insisted on having back their money.

“ Jack demurred to this, and held out as long as he could speak or see—which was not very long—for, ‘like master like man,’ he fell over on his back, and the crowd robbed him of every shilling he had; and, not contented with inflicting this mark of their indignation upon him, pulled down the tent, tore the canvass and baize to ribbons, broke up the table, chair, and cask, and made a bonfire with them.

“ When Jemmy woke it was ‘pitch dark;’ he sat up, rubbed his eyes, and wondered where he was. By degrees his senses returned, and all the events of the day recurred to him; but where was the tent and the other articles that he had borrowed? Where was Jack? He stood upon his feet as well as he could, and looked about him, but in vain; it was too dark to discern any thing; he listened attentively, and heard, as he thought, some one groaning. He approached the spot, and tumbled over somebody, or something; he sat up again, and was pleased to find that it was a fellow-creature. He felt for the face, and catching hold of the nose whence the snores, which he had mistaken for groans, were progressing, gave it a hearty pull, which produced something that sounded exceedingly like—‘let me alone!’ The voice was the voice of Jack. Jemmy



began to show his joy at having found his confederate, by kicking him most vigorously. A wrangle ensued, in which a great deal of eloquence was displayed on both sides, and *that* led to a mutual agreement to fight it out. Finding that they could not stand up after one or two unsuccessful attempts to do so, an amicable arrangement was entered into, to have a 'turn up' sitting down.

"They were too weak to hurt one another much, and, having ascertained that their honour was satisfied by the bleeding of their noses and an increased obscurity of vision, they shook hands and proceeded, relying upon each other for support, to look about for their theatre and properties. It is needless to say they could not find them. Each accused the other of having stolen them, which led to a second engagement, which terminated in their both falling perfectly insensible.

"In the morning Jack was found by a labourer snug asleep in a ditch; but Jemmy could no where be seen. Jack recounted all he could recollect of the events of the preceding day and night, and promised his friend a quart at the 'dog house,' if he would assist him in searching for his master.

"After examining every ditch and pit in the neighbourhood to no purpose, faint cries of 'Help me out!' were heard from a distance. Following the sounds, they came to a large rushy pool, and there was poor Jemmy standing up to his neck in a snipe-bog. Jemmy was obese, and luckily, fat floats. A rope was obtained, and the conjurer dragged out more dead than alive.

"The ill-success of this first attempt deterred Jack from pursuing the profession further, and he set up entirely on his own account as a singer at public meetings, and a seller of dogs to the Oxford men, of whom, sometimes, he made a pretty good thing, and might have done well if he had had a capital, and could have stood *tick*.

"But, to return to our adventures. We finished our liquids and went to the theatre, though Tripes begged hard to be allowed to stay behind and have one more tankard of ale. Nor should we have been able to drag him off had he not been assured that there was a capital tap next door to the barn, which was fitted up as a theatre.

"The house was nearly full, and we all behaved remarkably well—for *Oxford men*—until the first piece was over; when a move was made for refreshments, Tripes leading the way. I slipped behind the scenes to congratulate old Chatty on the admirable way in which he had played his part. On inquiring for him, I was directed up a ladder to his 'dressing-room,' where he was changing for the afterpiece. After stumbling up the steps as well as I could, I found myself in a loft covered with tiles, through which, in many places, a view of the heavens could be obtained; and stepping over

he rafters, came to a piece of canvass, through which the rays of a rushlight cast a sickly gleam. I lifted it, and shall not readily forget the scene that presented itself to my view. There stood poor old Chatty, trembling like an aspen-leaf—his teeth chattering with cold, with nothing on his lower man but his drawers and a pair of grey silk stockings. In his hands he held a pair of black silk sit-down-upons, which he was examining by the faint light of the rush.

“ ‘What am I to do?—what *am* I to do? Confound the ladder!—confound the nail!—it goes right across—fourteen inches long at least—not another pair in the town that will fit me—can’t possibly go on in these—what can I do? uh! uh! uh!’ and he shuddered with cold.

“ ‘What’s the matter, old gentleman?’ I inquired, stepping forward and suppressing my laughter as well as I could—for he had his wig and pigtail on, with a handkerchief round his neck, tied in an enormous bow, that made his comical face look irresistibly ludicrous.

“ ‘Matter! Ah, my dear young friend, how d’y’e do? uh! uh! uh! I am dying with cold—perished to death, and have split my unmentionables. Oh! that infernal ladder! there’s a nail in it, and as I crept down backwards it caught me—the silk is rather old (forty years I should have guessed)—and, as I stooped to put on these rascally tight shoes, the rent extended suddenly—crack! and here I am, overture nearly over, and no unmentionables to go on with—uh! uh! uh!’

“ ‘I offered my services to run for a tailor, but he said there was no time for that.

“ ‘Oh, dear! oh, dear! I’ll slip off—put my cloak round me, get into a fly, and never come near this infernal cold hole again. Jackman! Mrs. Jackman! Miss Jackman!’

“ ‘Sir,’ replied a sweet voice; ‘what did you want?’

“ ‘Play the overture over again, and send on Patter with a comic song—let him sing it three times over, whether he is *encored* or not.’

“ ‘Any thing wrong, sir?’ inquired the lady, lifting aside the canvass, which separated the male from the female *rooms*, and tittering so enticingly that I immediately burst into a fit of laughter that made my sides ache, and old Chatty as savage as a fury.

“ ‘He stood eyeing us both alternately, and muttering ‘curses not loud but deep,’ displaying more real passion and ferocity than he had done in playing ‘Sir Anthony.’

“ ‘Let me mend them, sir; I’ll not be a minute about it,’ said the lady, laughing outright.

“ ‘Take them, then, you——,’ and bang went the tattered garments at the lady’s head, and he sat down on his trunk, looking spikeheads and blunderbusses at me without saying a word.

"I went to the top of the ladder, and begged the principal tragedian to get me a glass of hot brandy-and-water; and, when it was procured, returned to the old gentleman, who had just recovered his garment and his temper, and made him drink it off. This rendered him happy and comfortable, and in his gratitude for my kindness, he forgot and forgave my former misconduct.

"When the overture was over, and the comic song thrice sung, we went down—old Chatty descending very gingerly to avoid the nail. The bell rang and the curtain rose. Old Chatty went on, and I remained behind to chat with the manager. Before the first scene was over, I heard a great noise before the curtain, and imprudently exposed myself at the wings in trying to ascertain the cause of it.

"Tripes and our party caught sight of me, and immediately commenced calling out, 'Turn him out! Throw him over! Off, off, off!' In which they were joined by the *οἱ ἐν' Ὀλύμπῳ*.

"Old Chatty, who was in one of his best 'situations,' and knew not the meaning of these hostile cries, after playing in dumb show for five minutes, got in a rage, and, stepping to the foot-lights, bowed three times with his hand on his heart, and begged to know in what he had offended the audience.

"'Three cheers for old snuff and cigars,' cried Tripes, and three rounds of applause, with 'one cheer more,' followed.

"'Ladies and gentlemen,' continued Chatty, bowing, and taking a huge pinch of snuff, 'may I trust to that candour which always reigns in the breast of an English audience (hurrah! go *it!*), and ask for that explanation of my never-before-upon-any-occasion-experienced reception which a Briton never refuses to give?' (Hurrah! old un.)

"No answer being returned, he bowed to the boxes, pit, and gallery successively, and was about to resume the dialogue, when Tripes, who was holding on by one of the pillars, began to address the house.

"'Gentlemen and ladies——.'

"'Ladies fust,' said a voice from the gallery.

"'Turn *him* out,' cried another.

"'No! no! hear! hear!' and 'a speech from the gen'leman in licker!' induced Tripes to proceed.

"'Ladies and gentlemen (hiccup), fair play's a jewel, (hiccup), the bills say, No admittance behind the scenes, and I can see distinctly, (Fudge—you squints horrible), I say I can see distinctly—when I shut one eye—my friend, Wydeawake, just behind that tree (why, it's a pump—ha! ha! ha!) well—much obliged for the information—behind that pump, (hiccup), and I'll have him off, or else I'll go on (hiccup) myself.'

"'Bravo! off!' Hisses and all sorts of noises peculiar to theatres, and 'another place' succeeded; but, before I could obey the order

and leave the stage, Tripes made a spring from the boxes, and by using the fiddler's back for a stepping place, leapt upon the stage. The curtain fell amidst laughter, applause, and hisses. A scene took place behind the scenes that baffles all description; for the rest of our party 'followed the leader,' with the exception of Tom Springer, who was too much convulsed with laughter to jump, and had thrown himself backward in his seat, showing his delight by clapping his hands over his head, and grinning fiercely.

"I expostulated with Tripes and his friends, but to no purpose; the actresses all fled, and the actors began to look big and threaten. Old Chatty walked up and down, muttering, 'Shameful! blackguards! disgusting—tell the vice-chancellor—the proctors—rusticated—expelled—ruined for life, see if I don't.' The constables were sent for by the mayor, who happened to be in the house, but before they could arrive, Solomon, who was warmed with too much Dutch courage, struck the comic-singer for asking him to 'stand a quart,' and a general fight ensued, in the midst of which that mischievous dog Tripes drew up the curtain, and called upon the audience to walk in and see the wild 'beastisses.'

"Of course, a rush did take place from the gallery to the stage, and we were nearly being overpowered by numbers—for the Abingdonians took, and justly, the part of the players, when the mayor, with three or four constables, 'came on' to 'play his part,' and, appealing to me in a gentlemanly way, begged of me to interfere with my friends, and prevent poor Jackman and his family being ruined by the damage his scenery and properties would sustain, and by being compelled to close his theatre. This was putting it in a proper way, and we gave him three cheers and left the stage, *via* the orchestra, followed by every one but Solomon, who was washing his nose under the pump.

"While we were waiting for the play to begin again, Tripes whispered to me, 'I've got it.'

"'Got what?'

"'Oh! never you mind—I've got it,' (hiccup).

"An unaccountable delay took place from some cause or other in the raising the curtain, and the audience began to display their impatience by whistling, knocking with their sticks, and kicking against the sides of the boxes; when old Chatty, putting aside 'greeny,' stepped forward with his hair *au naturel*, and in a dreadful passion appealed to the 'ladies and gentlemen' against the blackguardly and disgraceful conduct of some *gentleman—ironicè dictum*—who had stolen his wig.

"Amidst loud cries of 'shame! shame! never mind, go on without it,' Tripes rose, and, putting the missing article on the end of a stick, handed it over the orchestra to Chatty, favouring him and the house with the repetition of the Joseph Miller, 'that he

was not the first old gentleman that could not keep his hair on his head.' The gallery of course laughed, and Chatty 'cut a mug,' in which rage and politeness, arising from the fear of losing a good customer in the cigar line, were so oddly blended, that the house was restored to its good humour, and all would have gone on well had not Jack Greatman roared out from the pit, 'Three cheers for the gen'lman what priggid the wig,' which produced a great uproar, and, amidst cries of every kind—screaming, screeching, and hurrahing, the decent part of the townsmen and their female friends left the house, and the mayor and constables were obliged again to interfere.

"Quiet was partially restored, the play went on, and all would have ended well yet, but for Tripes, who, observing a fellow in the gallery with a face like a round of beef, and a mouth like an almanac—reaching from one *ear* to the other, called out, 'There's a mouth for mutton!' pointing to the individual at the same time with his stick, that there might be no mistake.

"A dialogue ensued, in which Charterhouse decidedly proved its superiority, and the advantage of being situated so near Smithfield. The 'house divided,' and the ayes were in favour of Tripes, which so enraged the man with the open countenance, that he offered to fight his enemy for a quart.

"'Done,' cried Tripes, and, pulling out sixpence, threw it on the stage, saying, 'There's my stake, now post your's;' a proceeding that elicited three rounds of applause, which were repeated with greater spirit when Tripes began pulling off his coat.

"The mayor interfered for the third time, and Jackman wisely dropped the curtain, and, unheard, announced the performances for the following evening.

"As I knew that a general fight would begin if the Oxonians and the townsmen went out together, I begged the mayor would clear the house and the yard, and suffer us to remain until the crowd had left and dispersed themselves. To this he agreed, and, keeping fast hold, as I thought, of Tripes by the coat-collar, I was in hopes all would have ended quietly and peaceably. Hearing a noise of scuffling at the door, to my great surprise, I saw Tripes, who had slipped out of his coat and left it in my hand, squaring and hitting at the man with a mouth, who, though six feet high, and big enough to swallow his little adversary, was begging and entreating of him, in the most abject terms, not to hurt him.

"I leaped into the pit and seized Tripes round the waist, where I held him until his foe had vanished—which he did as fast as he could, and he had promised me, upon his honour, he would put on his coat and be perfectly quiet.

"We left the house, and, instead of being attacked, as we expected, were greeted with loud cheers, especially Tripes, who

was saluted as a 'plucky little-un,' and in high favour for having 'tackled' the biggest bully in the town.' Solomon, who was envious of his friend's praises, thought to acquire some little glory before he left, and accordingly selected a very little snob, and kicked him very hard. To his great surprise and annoyance, the lad turned round and returned the compliment. Tripes called, 'A ring! a ring?' which was immediately formed; but Solomon positively declined the combat as being ungentlemanly, and was compelled, amidst the hootings and hissings of both parties, to pay a sovereign for the assault.

"Old Chatty, who had resumed his muffi, came out in a very bad humour; and as he politely but positively refused our invitation to sup with us, and we could not do without him, we lifted him on our shoulders and bore him off in triumph to the Crown and Thistle, where he found it useless to grumble, and being fond of the good things of this life, wisely made up his mind to look cheerful, and eat and drink heartily.

"The supper was excellently cooked, and, as Chatty quoted,

'I smell it, upon my life it will do well,'

we all of us did justice to it. After supper, instructions were given to the waiters to be perpetually bringing in something drinkable, until further orders, and Tripes proposed 'beginning the evening' by calling on old Chatty, (who was abusing the landlord's cigars) for a song. He immediately complied; and, though age had deprived his voice of its original power and sweetness, sung one of Dibdin's old ones with great taste, and, of course, had his 'health and song' drunk, accompanied with 'A jolly good song and very well sung,' by all the party. Jack Greatman next favoured us, and noise and grimace made up for judgment and good taste, with the majority of us. Other songs and toasts followed in rapid succession, and as the jugs and bowls were emptied, the faster and louder grew the fun and noise. Practical jokes commenced, in which, of course, Tripes took the lead, by popping a tallow candle into Springer's mouth, who was, as usual, half asleep and making hideous faces, by opening and shutting his eyes in a very peculiar manner. Solomon found a pair of snuffers, a nutmeg-grater, and two halves of lemon in his coat-pocket, which he threw, one by one, as he abstracted them, at the head of his tormentor, who of course 'ducked,' and Jack Greatman became 'receiver general' of the missiles.

"Being more than three parts sprung, Jack was indignant, and told Stingo he was a fool, and that if he insulted him again he'd resent it.

"Solomon turned up his nose, which was quite unnecessary, as it's a regular pug, and declined noticing the threats of a *snob*.

“ ‘Snob! who do *you* call a snob?’ replied Jack, rising from his chair, and looking magnificent, ‘has your mother parted with her mangle yet? By the blood of the Mondays! Snob indeed! I haven’t the pleasure of your intimate acquaintance, but I’ll lay a pound your father’s only a shopman.’

“ ‘My father, sirrah, is a highly respectable brewer; brews the best porter in London,’ said Solomon, looking grand.

“ ‘Yes,’ replied Jack, ‘and would keep you and your brother and sisters on his grains, if he did not use nothing but quassia and molasses.’

“ ‘Come, come,’ cried Tripes, ‘don’t be impudent, Jack, but sit down directly;’ which he did, into a large bowl of red-hot punch, which Tripes had deposited in his chair, in order that his person might meet with a ‘warm reception.’ The china bowl, of course, fell a victim to Jack’s weight; and Solomon cried with delight as he saw him capering about the room, holding his scalding garments as far off from his skin as possible, and grinning with agony.

“ ‘Bravo! beautiful grinning! Bring a horse-collar,’ shouted the company.

“ ‘Now, Jack,’ said Tripes, ‘give us a bit of ventriloquism.’

“ ‘Can’t, master, indeed I can’t, without some more rosin, and (in a whisper) send round the hat.’

“ A jug of hot punch being supplied, and a collection of twenty-five shillings pocketed, Jack made a fool of himself for five minutes in his vocation, and occupied another ten in praising himself, to the detriment of the immortal professional mimes of London, dead or alive, and Mr. Morgan, of the Peacock, into the bargain; all of whom, in his opinion, were far inferior to himself.

“ A horn being heard in the distance, Dick bolted to see the Stroud mail ‘up’ come in, and Tripes pretended to go with him—how *he* employed himself will be seen presently. He was apparently quite sober by this time, and looked all alive, as Chatty said,

‘ By breaking through the foul and ugly mists  
Of vapours, that did seem to strangle him,’

when he left the playhouse. Let him be drunk as he will, a jug of *good* beer always sobers him.

“ Tom Springer and little Rooke, who were verging toward a state of somnolent inebriety, went out zigzag-ging, arm-in-arm, to call on a friend, one of our men, who is rusticated and lodging with his wife in the town, and I may as well finish their adventures at once.

“ When they got to the house, of course, every body was gone to bed; but a repetition of ‘hard knocks,’ in which they were aided by the watchman, for half-a-crown, produced a slipshod maid, upon whom Springer would have made an ungenerous attack, had she

not been too quick for him, and scudded up stairs, screeching loud enough to rouse landlord, landlady, and the lodgers.

"An explanation ensued, which, though it was rather enigmatical, from the obfuscated state of the invading parties, convinced Mr. Screw, the lodger, that Messrs. Springer and Rooke would not retire without tasting his tap.

"Grog was produced, flanked with a box of Chatty's best cigars; and Springer, though no smoker, was weak enough to funk declining a 'weed,' and puffed powerfully and awkwardly, as the uninitiated in fumigating are wont to do. The harder he puffed the wiser he looked, and discovering a poll-parrot in a wire prison, undertook to give her a taste of the weed which grew in her own climes.

"'What's o'clock?' cried poll.

"'Rather late, poll.'—(Puff! puff! puff!)

"'Who are you?' continued poll, shaking her head, and sneezing like a human.

"'Master of Arts, and Pro—' (puff! puff! puff!) 'and you're a very pretty poll.'

"'Pretty poll,' repeated the bird, and fell in an atrophy off her perch.

"Screw was dismayed, and expressed his fears that the bird was dead, which would infallibly break Mrs. Screw's heart.

"The mention of Mrs. Screw, to whom he had never been introduced, suggested to Tom the absolute necessity of going up into her bedroom, to be presented to her in proper form. In vain did Screw suggest deferring it until another time, and hint at the impropriety of the proceeding. Tom was too polite to quit the house without seeing the mistress, and, divining the direction of her bedroom, proceeded to ascend the stairs. 'Such a gitting up stairs there never was seen,' for Screw caught him by the coat-tail, which ungratefully 'forsook his master,' and let Mr. Screw into an inglorious tumble. Mrs. Screw, who, as young brides are wont to do, had been listening, horror-struck, to the proposal of grog and cigars at that inconvenient season, and the still more awkward proposal of an introduction to a stranger in her nightcap, closed, locked, and bolted her bedroom door. Tom heard the click and scrunch of lock and bolt, and in very eloquent terms applied his mouth to the keyhole, and requested admission. Not receiving any reply, and feeling very thirsty, he tumbled down stairs to his friend Rooke, who was busily engaged in trying to bring Polly to life again, by pouring raw brandy down her bill with a teaspoon, for which Tom called him 'a beast,' and knocked him down. For an undergraduate to return the blow was a breach of discipline, so Rooke contented himself by putting his head between the M.A.'s legs, and throwing



him over his back on his nose, which relieved the oppression on his brain, by discharging a quart of the 'vital stream.'

"Peace was made by Screw, and another glass of half brandy and half water convinced the parties of the necessity of retiring, and going home.

"Tom insisted on walking, and Rooke was forced to consent, upon pain of being 'imposed,' if he refused. Tom Springer borrowed a large stick, as a protection against thieves, with which he so belaboured one of the watch, who was trying to convince him that the Farringdon road was not the way to Oxford, that the poor 'guardian of the night' was ill for a week.

"They got on pretty well to Bagley wood, tacking of course, and chiefly on the loosing tack. There Tom brought up, all standing, and insisted on passing the night *alfresco*, in one of the seats near the 'old man's gate.' Rooke, who was drunk and tired, willingly assented, and there we luckily discovered them, by the light of the fly lamps, and in spite of Tom's threats carried them home.

"To return to the Crown and Thistle.

"Many of the men were preparing to go home, having the terrors of the Dean before their eyes, and, of course, none of them had any money, and solicited me to 'settle every thing;' which was very agreeable, as I had just fourteen shillings in my pocket.

"Jack was gone after Dick, by my orders, and old Chatty began to entertain me with a long discussion on the superiority of his snuffs, over those of Messrs. Fribourg and Treyer, of the Haymarket, and the very excellent coffee which—real Mocha—procured from an intimate friend of his in Smyrna—Mrs. C. made every evening. Then he digressed about the sad falling off of modern dramatists and modern actors, and told me many excellent anecdotes of the Kembles, Downton, Munden, and other old favourites of his own day. Thence he descended to the merits of Mrs. C.'s mutton-broth, and some very capital whiskey, which he had had sent him by an uncle in Campbell town. I grew fidgety and uneasy, but was forced to listen to his complaints, touching Mr.—, of Ch. ch, who owed him 4*l.* 15*s.*, and Mr.—, of Corpus, who had let his bill of 2*l.* 2*s.* run for four terms, and left him, and dealt with Bryant or Castle; and sundry other instances of pecuniary defalcations and disappointments, in which I was not at all interested.

"Poor old Chatty, with a kind heart, and the very best intentions, ruined a fine business from want of capital, temper, and a regular Oxford-bred tradesman's education. No man, who has not had a *pater*, an *avus*, a *proavus*, and *atavus* in trade at Oxford, ought ever to think of setting up business in that university. It is a system *per se*, and all the modes of bookkeeping, by single and double entry, that are taught in the best commercial academies,

cannot give a stranger an insight into it. It's unlike the smallpox, and cannot be caught by inoculation.

"I was forced to rid myself of the old man by promising to go to Short-cut cottage, to eat some of Mrs. C.'s mutton-broth, and taste his uncle's whiskey.

"When he was gone, I roused up Solomon, who was sound asleep, and snoring awfully, on the sofa, and told him, as I had no tin, I hoped he would pay the bill. He stared incredulously, and, buttoning up his pockets, swore vehemently that he would not be imposed upon in that way, and even refused to lend me 10*l*. I gave the beast a killing look, and emptied a decanter of water into his trouser's pocket.

"When the waiter brought in the bill, I went into the little bar and told the landlord (who was smoking a churchwarden), that most of the men had gone off, and I had not sufficient money to settle for all, but, if he would take my card, 'Wydeawake, St. Peter's College, Oxford,' I would be responsible for the amount.

"'Much obliged, sir, I'm sure—but that arn't at all in my line. Charles, the waiter, is responsible to me; if he likes to trust, well and good—it arn't in my line.'

"Charles fortunately knew me, having been underwaiter, at the Star, and I easily arranged that he should come over next day and receive his money. I almost made up my mind never to remain sober again, as the Sober-Johns always have to 'stand Sam'—as Solomon calls paying for all.

"Just as this pleasant arrangement was completed, George Blunt opened the bar-door—without knocking, of course, and said to me :—

"'I wishes as you'd come out, there's that young Gallows as comed in the tandem, a been a playing the very devil with Scuffle-dust's fly!'

"I went out, and, on opening the door of the vehicle, found two barber's poles, a pair of postboy's boots, three sign-boards, a stable-bucket, five knockers, nine bell-pulls, a door-plate, part of a truss of hay, a gridiron, a frying-pan, and a stable-lantern still alight, stowed away in the fly.

"'And that arn't all, neither,' said George; 'for he's been and unbuckled all the harness, and changed the hooks and bits, and when 'fust-turn-out's' wanted, I'm blowed if he won't have to whistle for his saddle.'

"I inquired where Mr. Tripes, who, I knew, was the *causa tanti mali*, was.

"'He's in the tap,' replied George, a making of all the postboys tosticated with malt lickier.'

"I sent the waiter for him, and insisted that the tandem and the fly should be got ready directly. I took Tripes with me into the

bar to prevent further mischief, and allowed him one pint of ale, while I smoked one pipe with the landlord. Just as we were finishing our supererogatory amusements, George again entered, dragging 'little Snap' by a halter.

" 'Here's a pretty go, master; I'm blessed if I stands it.'

" 'What is it, George?'

" 'What is it? it's all werry well o' you axing that ere; but if Mr. Job had been alive and kicking, I'm blessed if *his* patience 'ud a stood it.—Kim here, you varmint,' (to the dog).

" 'Well, but what's the matter?' inquired his master.

" 'Why, this here nasty little twud has been and yeat a postboy's saddle flaps, one skirt of a great coat, and six new olters; least ways if she arn't a yet 'um, she 's been and knarred 'um all to ribbons.—Kim here, you varmint.'

" 'Well, the gentleman will make all that right, I dare say.'

" 'You dare say, that's more nor I do; for she belongs to that ere werry keveer kiddy with the sandy hair and as tinky look.'

" Solomon, who staggered in just at the moment, and heard this unflattering description of his personalities, looked malicious at George, who took no further notice of him than to observe :—

" 'This here's the precious sample as I alludes to—you draw him, master, while I goes and look's to the hosses.'

" The landlord mentioned to Solomon the facts which George had stated, and suggested a due recompense, to which Stingo demurred energetically, until the waiter was called and ordered to lock Snap up, and not let her go until the damages were assessed and paid; when, seeing that Snap was in danger of being imprisoned, and perhaps kidnapped, he liberally offered—one shilling. A sovereign was named, and eventually paid.

" George entered again.

" 'I'm blessed if there arn't another precious go, master!'

" 'What now, George?'

" 'What, indeed! Why, one of them ere gentlemen in No. 2, as had the beef-stakes and inons, and two gallons of beer, and come in on a spavined horse, gets up and tells me as his friend 'ull pay; and, before I could go and ax him, I'm blessed if he did not jump upon *his* horse, and gallop off like blazes—done me clean.'

" 'Sorry for it, George; but——.'

" 'Sorry be——; that won't pay me for two feeds of oats, and threepenn'orth of old beans. And then there's two gentlemen as is too bosky to wag, wants a shay to Oxford.'

" 'Very well; what horses have we in?'

" 'Why, there's Fair Helen, and Harleykin Billy—that ere jumpin' horse as you bought out o' the commercial's trap.'

" 'Well, they'll do.'

“‘And what’s little Jemmy to do for his boots as that ere little, genelman (pointing to Tripes) stole?’”

“‘Wrap his legs up in a hayband,’ cried Tripes. ‘I’ll stand heavy to any amount.’”

“‘Will you?’ cried George, ‘you’re a trump, and he shall ride bare as a bird, all the way for sich a one.’”

“Tripes was delighted at his liberality being so justly appreciated, and, Dick coming in, I saw them safe off in the cart, and carried Solomon and his dog into the fly.

“When we got to the bottom of the hill in Bagley Wood, the driver pulled up, and, on looking out to ascertain the *pourquoi*, I saw Dick and Tripes ‘rubbing down’ themselves and the horses, who were amusing themselves with kicking and biting one another as usual.

“‘What’s the matter?’”

“‘Matter!’ cried Dick; ‘why, I merely got down for two minutes, and Tripes got into the driving-seat, and swore he’d drive home. I tried all I could to dissuade him, but he would not yield, so I did, and the stupid——.’”

“‘Mind your eye, Dick,’ cried Tripes; ‘no abuse.’”

“‘—Fool pulled the wrong rope—run the leader up a bank, and capsized the trap.’”

“‘Never mind, old chap, better luck another time—all right—drive on, Dick.’”

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“‘Well, here we are safe and sound,’ cried Dick and Tripes both; ‘floor your taps, and let’s begin the evening.’” Carried without a division.

## CHAPTER X.

THREE or four days after the unlucky accident that befel Mr. Downe and Mr. Tripes - I allude to their being spilt out of the tandem, on the Abingdon road—I shut up the common-room earlier than usual, as all its members were out at a party; and just as Tom tolled nine o’clock, I left college to enjoy my supper with Mrs. Priggins, who had promised me some stewed oysters, of her own preparing, as a treat.

As I walked down St. Peter’s Lane, my mouth watered at the thought of the dainty dish in store for me; for I was very hungry, having purposely refrained from my usual bread-and-cheese and ale in the buttery. I opened my door with the latch-key, and, instead of hearing the merry laugh of Mrs. P., or her voice rebuking the children or the maid, I was surprised at the sounds of violent

hysterical sobbings, proceeding from the parlour. I entered the room, and, instead of the neat, white supper-cloth, and other indispensables for our meal, I saw nothing on the table but Mrs. P.'s elbows, supporting her face, which was covered up in a dingy pocket-handkerchief, from the folds of which issued the melancholy sounds which I had heard.

"Polly, my dear," I exclaimed, in endearing terms and sympathetic accents, "my dearest Polly, what *is* the meaning of this, and where *are* the oysters?"

Instead of a reply, these reasonable inquiries merely produced a more vigorous repetition of sobs, accompanied by the devil's tattoo on the carpet. No one was in the room to whom I could apply for an explanation but Master Nicomedes, who was sitting upon a footstool, making a popgun out of the top joint of my new flute, or rather trying to hide the half-finished weapon from me by-cramming as much of it as he could into his trousers-pocket.

"Nic, boy, what ails your mother?" I inquired.

"Ow can hi tell, hi should like to know? She ha' been hat hit all the harternoon."

"Where are the oysters, boy?"

"Highsters," cried Nic, turning very pale; "what do you mean them things has was in the basin, and looked, for hall the world, like garden-snails with their jackets hoff?"

"Yes, to be sure; where are they?"

"Ho! *hi* heat *them* hall."

"Oh, you did, did you! and pray what may that be protruding from your pocket?"

"Ho! this ere? that ere's nuffin—but—a—a—a"

"Give it me, sir."

Nic reluctantly produced the flute-joint, which was already in a state of weaponly forwardness, having the blowing-hole tightly stopped up with a vent-peg out of a beer-barrel, and the upper end drilled with a red-hot poker, and, of course, quite spoilt for musical purposes.

"Patience is a virtue," as the copy-books say; but a man must have more of it than I have if he could stand having his oysters devoured, and his new flute ruined, without losing a considerable portion of it. I confess that I lost all mine, and, seizing a stick resembling an *appoggiatura*, slim and slender, with a nob at the end, I gave Master Nic a sound thrashing with it.

Mrs. P. bore the shrieks of her darling child—for, being the youngest, of course he is the pet—without remark, until a badly-aimed blow, intended for his back, fell upon his head, and elicited a roar extraordinary. Then she dropped her handkerchief tragically, and, showing her "red, red" eyes and dishevelled locks, uttered the Cæsarean "*tu brute*," which, in English, sounded

very like "you brute!" She then relapsed into her former attitude, and resumed the "silent system," nor could any of my coaxings, reproachings, revilings, or entreatings—for I tried all by turns—induce her to explain the cause of her violent grief.

I think I recollect a passage in Euripides, which alludes to the advantages which a male has over a female in cases of family disquietudes. I won't quote it, as I have been accused of pedantry already, and the *Greek* mania perished with Byron; I will merely say I acted upon it, and betook myself to my companions, and had a hearty supper at the Shirt and Shotbag, which I rectified with certain additional glasses, to give me courage to face Mrs. P. at a curtain lecture.

I must say, in a parenthesis, that I think Byron prigged the ideas from the passage alluded to above in his "Don Juan"—I mean in the letter of Donna Julia, where she says,

"Man may range," etc., etc.

I may be unjust in accusing the noble bard of borrowing; it may merely have occurred, as Puff says in "The Critic," that Euripides "happened to think of it" before his lordship.

Broome and Dusterly, who were accidentally at Mr. Rakestraw's—an accident, by the by, that befalls them every night—were surprised and confounded at the very odd and incorrect conduct of my old woman, and highly indignant at Nic's destroying the harmony of the family—meaning, I imagine, by destroying my flute.

"His is 'ead urt?" inquired the latter.

"Not much," I replied.

"Hah! hit's a family 'ead—rather thick, hi dare say. No arm's done, depend on't. Now hi'll tell you ow hi huses *my* young uns when they offends me. Hif it's winter, I dips their airs in ha bucket of pumh-water, and makes' em stand in the hair till their airs his fruz as ard so has they can't drag a comb through 'em; and hif hit's summer, hi puts ha pound hof dripping hor lard into theirs ats, and stands 'em hin the sun till hits all run down hover their heyes and faces—that's what I calls fatherly correction, and breaking no bones."

Broome intimated that a well-seasoned ash stick was a more seize-on-able weapon at all seasons of the year; and Mr. Rakestraw, who had served in the waggon-train in the American war, was a strong advocate for the cat-o'-nine-tails, on the effects of which he speaks from experience.

"Bless my soul," exclaimed Broome, holding up the "Anti-present-state-of-things Gazette," a cheap paper that the landlord takes of one of his customers, who "takes it out" in gin: "Can this be true?"

"Wat his hit?" inquired Dusterly.

“ ‘We understand from private authority, on which we can depend, that the Honourable Mr. Augustus Noodledoodle Nincompoop, late consul at the North Pole, is to succeed his noble and aristocratic father, Lord Nincompoop, Baron Fuddlehead, as first lord of the scullery and clerk of the kitchen-range. We fearlessly pronounce this to be a most infamous and disgusting appointment, and a piece of gross jobbing; as every body knows the honourable (?) gentleman has not one single qualification for those important places. It is doubtless convenient to him to have the range of the kitchen; but why should the public be taxed for it? We leave it to our contemporary, the Penny Advocate of Existing Abuses, to answer that question—if it can.’ ”

“ ‘Why,’ said Dusterly, “that must be your hold master, Lord Nincompoop, of Christ Church; you made a good thing hout hof im, and hought to stand glasses round to drink is ealth hon his happointment.”

The glasses were ordered, for Broome, in these matters, is “a Liberal,” and over them he told us a great many anecdotes of the honourable gentleman who was the object of the vituperations of the editor of the “Anti-present-state-of-things Gazette,” which I shall publish, with his kind permission, under the title of

#### THE SCHOOL AND COLLEGE CAREER OF THE HONOURABLE AUGUSTUS NOODLEDOODLE NINCOMPOOP.

But before I begin, I must, in justice to my readers, explain the cause of Mrs. P.’s very extraordinary and unusual conduct.

When I left my friends, and the Shirt and Shotbag—which was not until Tom had tolled twelve—I felt firmer in my mind than in my body. I resolved, as I went zigzagging down the street (for, though I was sober enough myself, and saw single still, my knees were very drunk indeed) to go straight to the point at once with Mrs. P., and to have none of her nonsense. I found her in bed amusing herself with snoring and sobbing contemporaneously. I have a faint recollection of striking a light, and making a very excellent speech in favour of my marital right to be informed of the meaning of her unwife-like behaviour, and of obtaining no other reply to it beyond a muttered,

“ ‘Drunken brute!’ ”

I was determined to punish such rebellious conduct; so I scrambled into bed and turned my back upon her without saying another word.

I dare say I fell asleep immediately, for a dozen glasses of grog, and a corresponding number of pipes, generally act as an opiate with me.

I don’t know how long I was permitted to sleep, but I was

aroused from a pleasant dream by Mrs. P.'s putting her arm round my neck, and giving me a hearty kiss, saying, at the same time, "she was fully satisfied it was all false."

I will not enter into all the particulars of the explanation that ensued, as, in these fastidious times, I might be unjustly accused of indelicacy. I need merely mention that Master Nicomedes, forgetful of the flavour of the gin-and-peppermint, and the promise he had made to Mr. Rakestraw, "up and told" his mother all about my being an odd-fellow, giving her a glowing description of the cruelties inflicted on the brotherhood at their initiation; and amongst others, that we were all branded on the back with the letters O. F., a foot long and an inch deep.

The idea of my being branded like a felon, and with the letters O. F., which might justly have been interpreted "old fool," as well as odd fellow, had proved too much for the feelings of Mrs. P.

I need not say that the very first offence Master Nic committed after this indefensible disclosure of my belonging to a secret society, was visited with a double dose of the stick; as he himself allowed, "he cotched it like winkin."

But enough of my domestics disarrangements. I will proceed at once with the history of the honourable gentleman who furnishes the subject matter of my tale.

The Fuddleheads, as the red book will show, are a very ancient and extensive family; indeed I believe there are very few counties in which a specimen of the breed may not be found located. It will be necessary, however, to explain how and by what virtues one branch of the family was raised to the peerage by the expressive and appropriate title of Nincompoop, and why the subject of this memoir was christened Noodledoodle in addition to Augustus. This will require a short account of his progenitors.

The first of the family who acquired any celebrity was the grandfather of Augustus. His name was John Fuddlehead, though his neighbours and friends generally called him Jack, and to his face too. He dwelt in that corner of the county of Gloucester which is bounded on one side by the river Wye, and on the other by the forest of Dean. He cultivated a farm of his own, which was more celebrated for its extent, and the beauty of its wild mountainous scenery, than for its fertility; indeed, beyond a few acres of scraggy-looking barley and stumpy oats, the whole crop consisted of flints and short grass, which would have puzzled any thing but a Welsh sheep, or a Welsh pony, to get a nibble at it. Of these agile and delicious-eating muttons Jack kept extensive flocks, by which, and a herd of some hundred ponies, he might have made a very good living had he not been too fond of society and strong ale.



As his farm at Stoneydown was some six miles from any other habitation, and the roads that led to it were impracticable for any thing but a mountain pony, Jack could not see much company at home. The nearest town, which I shall call Boughtborough, was about ten miles distant, and thither Jack repaired every evening to enjoy his beer and a game at put, or all-fours, with three or four choice companions, who were as idle and dissipated as himself.

As long as his mother lived—for his father died ere Jack came of age—she managed to keep things pretty well at the farm; but when she died, and no one, but hired servants, was left to look after it, weeds grew where corn was wont to grow, and the sheep and ponies were carried off by persons who had no legal claim to them but that of possession.

Jack would inevitably have been ruined had he not fallen in love with and married one Miss Winifred Jones, of Llachcynvarwydd, in North Wales, whom he discovered on one of his sheep-dealing excursions into those unknown regions. She proved a regular tartar, and kept Jack closely to his business and his home, and thus saved the lands of Stoneydown from passing out of the hands of the Fuddleheads for ever.

Jack, however, was so far involved that he required a hundred pounds "to go on with," and fill up the number of his flocks. He accordingly, with his wife's permission, and strict orders to be home before dark, went over to Boughtborough, and called on the lawyer—for that town, in those happy days, had only one of the profession in it—and was very scurvily treated, and sent home without any money, and with a hint from Mr. Price that he must ride over to view the farm of Stoneydown before he advanced any money upon the writings of it.

Price kept his word, and was so far satisfied with what he saw, that he not only advanced the hundred pounds, but offered to purchase the land for about half its value. To this Mrs. Fuddlehead decidedly objected, and lawyer Price went on bidding, until he actually offered beyond the then real value; which, as she was a very shrewd woman caused the lady to suspect that the lawyer had some very good reasons for believing that more might be made by the land than it produced at present, in some way or other, and she was determined to keep it in her own possession.

Her suspicions were strengthened by the lawyer's coming over several times afterwards, and trying all his persuasive powers to induce Jack to sell; tempting him with offers which he would not have had philosophy enough to resist but for his wife's obstinacy, as he called it. The mystery, like all other mysteries, was solved at last. One day, as Jack was riding up the hills, to look after his brood mares, he was surprised to see three men, one of whom was lawyer Price, busily engaged in boring the side of the hill with an

enormous iron gimlet. Jack jumped off his pony and walked quietly to the spot, which he reached just as one of the gentlemen pronounced a dark, reddish mass of stone, to be pure iron-ore. This was enough for Jack; for, stupid as he was in other respects, he was awake to his own interests. He rode home again, unseen by Price and his party, to tell his wife of his discovery, and had not been at home above an hour before the lawyer called, and doubled the amount of his former bidding. Mrs. Fuddlehead called him by some actionable names, and threatened to turn him out of the house; disclosing, too, her knowledge of the valuable contents of the hill, at which he was equally surprised and dismayed.

But to cut a long story short—in a few years the land of Stoneydown, whereon in former days stood the little farm-house, and whereon grazed the sheep and ponies, was covered with a noble mansion, furnaces, shafts, iron-works, and a large and populous village. The rental, too, on which Price had hesitated in advancing 100*l.*, was something like 100,000*l.* per annum. Jack Fuddlehead was transferred into John Fuddlehead, Esq., and returned the two members for Boughtonborough, by the advice and assistance of his solicitor and agent, Mr. Price, who was now his most obedient humble servant and factotum.

Jack's only son, after his father's death, which was hastened by the enormous quantity of strong beer he drank, to console him for the loss of his wife, sold the property very advantageously to a company. He had been brought up at Westminster and Oxford, and had imbibed very aristocratic notions of the impropriety of trading pursuits, and the positive necessity of forming a noble alliance. This he effected by making successful overtures to a broken-down bit of blood, the Hon. Miss Theodosia Noodledoodle, of Nincompoop, in the county of Monmouth, who insisted upon his using his influence with the government, which was considerable, from his borough interest, to be raised to the peerage, under the title of Lord Nincompoop, Baron Fuddlehead. In this he succeeded, and with the help of his lady obtained the government appointments, the transmission of which to his son gave, as we have seen, such offence to the editor of the "Anti-present-state-of-things Gazette."

The Noodledoodles had a very large pedigree and a very small estate, on which stood a large house, which resembled the family pedigree in its antiquity and uselessness. It was almost a ruin, and scarcely habitable. As the house at Stoneydown had been sold with the iron-mines to the company, and it was impossible for a lord to be without a country mansion, Lady Fuddlehead easily prevailed upon her noble husband to redeem the mortgaged lands of Nincompoop, and build a mansion thereon, more suited to the dignities to which he had been elevated than the old house, which, with very

little trouble, indeed almost *sponte sud*, was pulled down, and sold for "old materials."

In the mean while, as builders who do not work by contract do not erect noblemen's seats very rapidly, and it was requisite that the newly-married pair should have some place to reside in, Lord Fuddlehead proposed hiring a mansion for a time. This did not exactly accord with the lady's views. She had heard much of the joys of London life—I don't mean "life in London"—but presentations at court—birthdays—drawing-rooms—opera-boxes—rouls—drums—carriages—Hyde Park—morning calls, and shopping; and she had long "longed to follow to the town some warlike lord," or lady, and, having now a lord of her own, was resolved to gratify her longing.

Lord Fuddlehead, anxious to renew his acquaintance with the honourables—his associates at Westminster and Oxford—readily agreed to purchase "an eligible and splendidly-furnished mansion in Park Lane, the property of a gentleman who had no further occasion for it," and, as the "establishment," servants, carriages, and horses, were equally as useless to the gentleman about to leave as the mansion itself, they were included as sundries in one lot, and knocked down to his lordship as the highest bidder, to the mutual satisfaction of all parties.

Here, speedily after her location, Lady Fuddlehead purchased popularity, by feeding and entertaining the aristocracy sumptuously nearly every day, and not wishing to become "a leader," soon succeeded in playing a very respectable second fiddle on the stage of fashionable life.

Politics ran high in those days, and patriotism, in the modern acceptance of that abused word, was at a discount. To be "in place" was considered respectable, and Lord Fuddlehead, by virtue of his two sure votes for Boughtonborough in the lower, and his own as a peer in the upper house, obtained the valuable appointments of first lord of the royal scullery, and clerk of the kitchen range—the duties of which, it is generally supposed, are neither very laborious nor vexatious; it merely being required that the gentleman who holds them should attend the *levées*, with a very neat silver-gilt poker in his right hand, and a fine cambric dishcloth in his left, and sign a receipt quarterly for the amount of his salary;—the rest is done by deputy.

I regret that I cannot oblige Lord and Lady Fuddlehead by directing more of the public attention to them and their "sayings and doings," but my business is with their son—their only son—Augustus, whose birth in Park Lane was announced in the fashionable chronicles of the day, in an appropriate and sesquipedalian paragraph; which afforded "the gentlemen of the press" a very suitable opportunity of filling up a considerable portion of their columns, by

ecounting the titles, dignities, and enormous properties in lands, funds, and other securities, to which the newly-born honourable baby was the heir, which, of course, were *not* paid for by his "as-well-as-could-be-expected" mamma, and his honourable and nappy papa.

I shall pass over the days of his pap and puppyhood, merely observing that he cut his teeth very successfully under the well-fee'd hands of Sir Hippocrates Galen, and was baptized in a very handsome and enormous silver (punch)-bowl, by the Right Reverend, etc. etc., the Bishop of Blank; several highly-respectable personages of both sexes becoming bail for his little peccadilloes, until time should render him old enough to take the responsibility of them upon himself.

The mansion at Nincompoop, which appeared *upon* the earth at the same time with the heir thereof, grew with his growth, and strengthened with his strength, and both were pronounced to be presentable to the public about the same time—namely, at the age of ten years. Much care had been bestowed upon the internal arrangements, furnishing, and decorating of both—the stone and brick house being left to the superintendence of Messrs. France and Banting, and the fleshly mansion to the care of Mrs. Slushem the nurse, and Miss Emiline Trimmer, the nursery governess.

We must request the reader to be present at what is vulgarly called the "house-warming."

It is September, and a large party is assembled of such fashionables as could be induced to travel so far—consisting principally of young men, who wage war with partridges; mammas, who wish those same young gentlemen to take aim at and bag some of their numerous undowered daughters, and a sprinkling of offshoots of noble families, who, having a name, but no local habitation, condescend to occupy a suite of apartments at a friend's, in preference to seeking for "lodgings to let," or putting up with the expensive comforts of an inn.

Amongst these kind and condescending personages assembled at Nincompoop Hall, at the "opening dinner," was one whom I must introduce to the reader, as she caused a great alteration in the destinies—as far as the fate of his earlier years and education were concerned—of Mr. Augustus.

Lady Skinnykin Frostyface was a *vestale* of some forty-five winters' standing; well born, for she could boast of royal blood circulating through her veins; well educated, for she had been brought up in France; but very poor, and of course very proud. When Lady Fuddlehead appeared upon the scene of London life, Lady Skinnykin, knowing that she was the antipodes of herself, with regard to the goods of this world, wisely and benignantly resolved not to let the pride of high birth stand in the way of her

sharing and partaking of the advantages which money always ensures. By public patronage, introductions to persons to whom she might, without such assistance, have found access difficult, the arrangement of her visiting-list, and the remodelling of her already perfect establishment, she rendered herself so necessary to Lady Fuddlehead, that that lady—with difficulty, of course—induced her to resign her *bijou* of a cottage at Kensington, and take up her residence in a suite of rooms allotted to her in Park Lane.

Once established there, Lady Skinnykin made up her mind to remain with her “dear friend” for life, and accordingly commenced a series of operations, to render the citadel of her power impregnable. To effect this, she did not resort to the common arts of toadies and hangers-on, but boldly, as they say on the turf, “took the lead, and kept it,” without letting her host and hostess perceive that they were under her rule and guidance. She managed so cleverly, that she made every plan she wished to be executed appear to be the suggestion of themselves; and as all those plans tended to their progress in good, *i. e.* high society, they thought themselves extremely clever people, and were perfectly satisfied.

For ten years she ruled with despotic power—for both Mrs. Slushem and Miss Trimmer were in her interest—which she had secured by acting as a spy upon them, and threatening to expose certain little undefinable acts of delinquency, of which servants will be guilty, even in the best regulated families. Lady Fuddlehead was really attached to “her friend,” though, in her heart, “her friend” envied and detested Lady Fuddlehead. The only reason she could assign to herself for these feelings was, that she was not Lady Fuddlehead herself. Not that she loved Lord Fuddlehead, but his money,—and the powers that money conferred.

She “rather loved” Augustus, if she could be said to love any thing but herself, because he was a trump card to play, in her game with his honourable father and mother; for every little attention she showed him, and every little present she made him, she knew would be repaid to her tenfold. The feeling was certainly not reciprocal, for Augustus hated her very cordially, and told Miss Trimmer, with a hard kick, confirmatory, on the shins, “that he would not be lugged into the old cat’s room, to have his shoulders pulled out of their sockets, to make him upright; and his marbles taken away, because he should not play like the little dirty boys in the streets.” This answer, however, did not affect her ladyship in the least; she petted and provoked him, as if he liked it.

When the removal took place from London, to open the festivities at Nincompoop, of course Lady Skinnykin did not wait for an invite to join the party, but quietly arranged matters, so as to secure herself the best seat in the travelling carriage, and the most commo-

dious apartment in the new house,—in which we will join her, and her ally, Mrs. Slushem, on the morning after the opening dinner, which it will be needless to describe, as every body can imagine the “triumphal arches,” charity children, strewing flowers in their patrons’ path; the roasting of whole sheep and oxen; the getting very tipsy on beer and spirits, in tents erected in the park, among the lower orders; and “excited” by champagne and claret, amongst the higher rank of visitors; the presentation of the heir “to the estates, and virtues” of his sire, to his future tenantry, all of whom pronounced him to be the very image of his father and mother, who were as unlike each other as a negro is to a Chinaman; all this can be easily imagined; it is the *crambe repetita* of all country *fêtes*, given on marrying, coming of age, or committing any other kind of “family” foolery.

“Slushem,” inquired Lady Skinnykin, fixing her spectacles on her sharp nose, a thing she never did except before her intimates, “who was that remarkably nice gentleman in black, who sat with Mr. Augustus on his knee, when you came to remove the young gentleman from the drawing-room?”

“Why, my ledly, I is not disactly made inquainted of his precise sitivation in this here ’stablishment as yet; least ways, to the best of my belief, he’s to be one of us; though for all, as he is to have a room to hisself, and not to have no vails or parkisits; but his wages is exillint—more nor Mr. Stickiton’s, the house steward.”

“Wages—perquisites—establishment—what can you mean?” said Lady Skinnykin. “I thought it was some clerical connexion of the family—a dean or prebendary—or some other inferior order of the clergy.”

“No, my ledly, no!” replied Slushem, trying to look what she called “contemtious;” “he’s only what Mr. Nutmegs, the butler, calls a cad to the recumbent of the parish.”

“A curate! *Mon Dieu!!*” exclaimed her ladyship, taking off her spectacles, “is that all?”

“Not disactly, my ledly: he’s been ’pinted as tootorer to Master Gussy.”

“What?” inquired her ladyship, feeling at a nonplus.

“A tooturer—or a teacher—or a learner, for they’re all as one—a chap as is to read prayers, and preach to the ’stablishment, write my lord’s letters, read the noos out loud, and walk out with the little right honourable, when it’s fine; and if it powers o’ rain, to play battledoor and shuttlecock with him in the libery.”

“*Est-ce possible?* a private chaplain appointed without my advice being asked!” cried Lady Skinnykin, looking as horrified as if high treason had been committed. “Lady Fuddlehead *must* and *shall* account to me for this.”

“If my ’pinion was arsk’d,” said Slushem, “I should say as her

laddyship, my missus, arn't in no ways consarned in the 'pintment whalsomdever. I heard my lord say, that as how Mr. Scanner was a young man as had got him a great-go at Oxford college, and as he had consikently collected him to put Mr. Augustus through his little-goes; which, I supposes, means pegtops, hoops, and marvels, afore he learns to ride."

Lady Skinnykin, after dismissing Slushem, threw her shawl over her scraggy shoulders, and entered the boudoir of her friend and hostess, whom she found in company with Miss Trimmer, teaching her young hopeful (who was very sulky because he was not to be dressed in his best, and shown on the lawn to the tenantry, two days running,) how to play at scratch—or cat's-cradle. An intimation that she had something mysterious to impart to her dear friend, induced the nursery governess to retire with her promising pupil; and Lady Skinnykin, upon explaining all she had heard about the tutor, was enraged to find that her "dear friend" had taken the important step of consenting to admit such an animal into the house without consulting *her*.

And why did she feel annoyed at so very common a proceeding, in most, or at least, many married families, who prefer private to public education? Simply because she dreaded, lest the eye of a third and disinterested party should detect the system of tyranny, or rather true despotism, that she exercised over the heads of the family of the Fuddleheads.

Her "dear friend" was quite amazed at the horror displayed by her ladyship at the idea of her son's not being sent to Eton, Charterhouse, Westminster, or some other public school, where he would have the advantages of an early insight into the world, and the chance of forming noble associations! A great deal was said on both sides upon the never-yet-settled question, the superiority of private over public, and public over private education, which ended in Lady Skinnykin promising to write to her brother, Lord Wastepaper, for an appointment to Rotherwick school; which, as it was founded especially for the sons of decayed merchants and tradesmen, was, of course, admirably suited for the heir-apparent to a peerage, and 100,000*l.* per annum. Before an answer could be given to her application, her ladyship found that her plans were likely to be defeated by Lord Fuddlehead, who was fool enough to think that he was not justified in robbing some poor devil of a good education gratuitous, by accepting an appointment for his own son, whom he could well afford to educate at home, and provide for an old friend and private tutor into the bargain. All her ladyship's arguments went for nothing; and, as argument would not avail, she tried stratagem, in which she was more *au fait*.

Trimmer had formed a virtuous *liason* with the serjeant, who was engaged to teach Mr. Augustus his manual exercise—an edu-

cational excess committed universally in days of yore—and her secret had been accidentally discovered by lady Skinnykin; whose ears were more frequently applied to keyholes, than to their natural and legitimate uses.

The possession of this secret enabled her ladyship, by threatening to tell her employers, and ruin her for life, to make poor Trimmer (who was merely waiting to make up a certain sum sufficient to furnish a house for herself and the serjeant, her future husband,) do pretty much as she pleased. What she did insist upon her doing, and how it succeeded in aiding her ladyship's views, will be seen in the sequel.

"I am really surprised at your blindness, my dear Fuddlehead," said her ladyship, after a week's residence at Nincompoo; "is it that you *do* not see, or *will* not see?"

"See what?" cried her "dear friend."

"Why, what every one, with the minutest portion of penetration, *must* see—that Mr. Scanner is making the agreeable very violently to poor deluded Trimmer."

"Impossible! he's engaged, I assure you, in another quarter—to a highly-respectable, and rather superior young person—Miss Price, our *homme d'affaire's* daughter."

"Engaged or not, I will venture to predict that he is at this moment paying assiduous attentions to poor Emiline in the school-room. Come with me, and judge for yourself."

Lady Skinnykin did not "lead the way," but dragged her "dear friend" with her, by locking her reluctant arm within her own; and throwing open the door of the school-room, as the nursery was now called, discovered the Rev. Mr. Scanner holding Miss Trimmer, who was fainting, in his arms.

Lady Fuddlehead, without waiting for any explanation of the scene before her but prematurely imagining an unpleasant *dénouement* of the drama or farce, rushed to her husband's room, and pronounced sentence of expulsion on the reverend gentleman, and that too without any time or warning being given him.

His lordship, urged, by his wife, and worried by her "dear friend," was obliged to comply, and poor Scanner was dismissed with a check for 500*l.*, secretly bestowed by his patron; and Miss Emiline Trimmer, with her arrears of wages, and a 50*l.* note, from Lady Skinnykin.

The former did *not* hear any thing which he might have to say in his defence—until Miss Trimmer had become the lawful and wedded wife of Serjeant Shanks, of the Guards; after which event, she gave Miss Price, in a general poster, a full and particular account of the way in which she had been induced, by the threats and promises of Lady Skinnykin, to invite Mr. Scanner into the nursery, under the pretence of asking him some grammatical ques-



tion, and pretending to faint, just as she heard her ladyship's "hem!" upon the staircase.

Lord Wastepaper had fortunately a vacancy, and sent the appointment, under cover, to his sister, who made a very long speech about her delight at being able to recompense her "dear friends," in some slight degree, for the numerous favours, etc., etc., etc. — which may be summed up in one word—humbug!

The school of Rotherwick, so called—for I like to be particular—from the word *rother*, which means cattle of some kind or other, and *vicus*, a village, probably derived its name from its proximity to a large cattle-market, like Southall or Islington. It was founded by a private gentleman, who had amassed an enormous property, (and who had no family to inherit it) for the benefit of the sons of decayed tradesmen. The foundation-boys, to the number of fifty, were educated, clothed, and fed at school, for some seven or eight years, and then either apprenticed at the school's expense, or sent to Oxford or Cambridge, with good exhibitions or scholarships. But, besides these fifty collegers, there were some four hundred boarders and town boys, who had the same education as the others, but had to pay pretty handsomely for it; but the honour of being a Rotherwickian was well worth all the money, as, instead of poor broken-down tradesmen's sons, the appointments were generally conferred upon the junior branches of noble and distinguished families, intended for the liberal professions.

The trustees, or governors, as they are called, might be blamed by some unthinking persons for thus defeating the intentions of the founder; but, upon due consideration, they ought not to be blamed for securing some recompense to themselves, or their families, for the inconveniences arising from the trusteeship. They were sometimes obliged to meet for two hours' business, *twice* in the year, and then to sign their names to the already audited accounts, besides writing out an appointment, when it came to their turn to fill up a vacancy.

Armed with the appointment signed by Lord Wastepaper, the Honourable Augustus, and his noble *père*, proceeded in the carriage and four, with outriders, to Rotherwick, which was, and still is, I believe, in the neighbourhood of London. The boy, who had no conception of the miseries in store for him, was delighted at the thoughts of having companions of his own age and rank to play with, and had a notion that he should make an enormous impression upon their youthful minds, by the display of ten golden guineas—his first *tip*—and the exceedingly elegant cut of his blue jacket and trousers, covered with brass basket-buttons, and covering limbs, which resembled a young calf's—being all knees and elbows. Lord Fuddlehead gave him some judicious advice, about spending his money like a gentleman, and associating with no boy

below himself in rank, and being particular in his dress and manners. As to his moral conduct, he left that entirely to the masters, who were paid to look after such matters.

When the carriage and four, with its outriders, servants, etc., drove into the college-yard, the windows—as they say of the yards of a man-of-war—were “manned” by the boys who were staring in admiration at the turn-out, and burning with curiosity to know who the fresh arrival could be. A few trifling bets of a sovereign or two were laid upon the rank indicated by the coronet on the panels, and the long odds were offered and taken, that the “little kivey” in the blue and bright buttons had not one of those bright buttons left on his blues by eight o’clock the next morning. Strong hopes were expressed by some of the little ones, that the new boy had not had the measles, hooping-cough, or scarlet-fever, but would be laid up with one or other of those infectious disorders very soon, that they might catch it of him, and be sent home to their friends.

As soon as the “governor and his brat” had been admitted to the head-master’s, one of the servants was called to the windows by several voices, and interrogated thus :—

“You, sir! in the rhubarbs and yellows—come hither! Who’s your master?”

John hesitated.

“Why don’t you answer? you long-legged lout! I wish I was outside these bars, I’d darken your daylight, and knock your ivory cribbage-pegs down your throat. Who’s your master?”

Two or three books, a slate, and sundry knobs of coal, were converted into missiles, which induced John to tell the boys the name, rank, and residence, property, and qualities of his master, and he doubtless would have exceeded the truth to raise his own importance in the eyes of his young master’s future companions, had not the opening of a door leading from the head-master’s caused his auditors to disappear suddenly and simultaneously.

The carriage drove off just as Dr. Worthy, the head-master, entered the hall, and, summoning the senior monitor, introduced Augustus to him, simply as Master Nincompoop, and ordered him to place him under some master’s care, and to see him furnished with desk and bookcase. The doctor, though very much beloved by all his pupils, was a very severe man; and, although the announcement of the new boy’s name “titillated their risibles,” none of the boys ventured to laugh until he had quitted the hall. Then the under-boys began to grin and laugh out loud at little “Ninny,” as he was called from that day forth, but were ordered to their places by the monitor, who, with the upper-boys, wished to satisfy his curiosity first.

“Come hither, my little kivey! How’s your mother?”

"Pretty well, thank ye," replied Augustus, "'septing a little running at the nose from a cold."

"Well, never descend to particulars. What's your name?—how old are you?—who's your father?—how much money have you got?—where do you live when you're at home?"

Augustus gave a full, true, and particular answer to all these questions, which elicited sundry winks, shrugs, and grins from his hearers.

"I know all about him," said the Hon. Peregrine Tittleback, who was the walking red-book of the school, "his grandsire was a mechanic, who found metal, and converted iron into pewter. His sire is Lord Fuddlehead, a mere *parvenu*, a *novus homo*, who holds some low place about court, and his dam was a Noodle-doodle, one of a damaged family in Monmouthshire."

This announcement, which was fully credited—for Tittleback was an indisputable authority in pedigree matters, lowered Augustus several notches in the estimation of his schoolfellows, and one or two in his own—for he had fancied that the bare announcement of his name and future titles and estates would produce an awful sensation.

"Who wants a fag?"

"I do—it's my turn—I've only got two," replied a boy of the fifth form, who was called Black Jack, which was short for Black-guard Jackson—a title he had justly earned by his low, sneaking conduct—which will be displayed in his behaviour to his fag.

"Then take Ninny, there," said the senior monitor; "and don't bully him to death—if you do I'll lick you, if no one else will."

Jack looked savage, but, like all bullies, he was a great coward at heart, and made no reply but took Ninny up to his study, and addressed him thus:—

"You little honourable little vagabond, I'll lower your conceit for you in a very few days. Take that vessel of paper and that pen, and write down your list of necessities:—1 clothesbrush, 2 hair ditto, 1 tooth ditto, 1 large-tooth comb, 1 small-tooth ditto, 1 brush, 1 nail-brush, 1 square of soap, 1 pen-knife, 1 hack ditto, 1 frying-pan, 1 gridiron, 6 table-knives and forks, 1 kettle, 1 saucepan, 1 washing-basin, and 1 water-jug, 1 set of shoe-brushes, and a bath-brick."

Ninny wrote out the list, wondering what he could possibly have to do with several of the articles, but more especially the shoe-brushes, and the bath-brick.

"Now, how much coin have you got?" continued Jack.

"Ten golden guineas!" said Ninny, *ore rotundo*, and a magnificent look.

"Is that all?" inquired his master, contemptuously, "hand them out."

Ninny produced a very neat green silk purse, the workmanship of his fond mother, and Black Jack threw it, with its contents, into his desk, saying,

"I'll take care of it for you—but when I've paid for your necessities, and your subscription to the library, cricket-club, and tennis-court—I'm afraid you'll be obliged to tick for a hockystick and a hoop—I don't allow my fags to eat cakes—they stuff and get lazy."

"But my father said," observed Ninny, with the tears trickling down his fair cheeks, and his heart, as they sometimes say, up in his mouth, "that I was to keep my own money my own self."

"I tell you what, you little wretch," said his master, pulling half a handful of his curly hair out by the roots, "if ever you allude to the governor again, or blubber in my presence, I'll show you up, and have you well flogged first, and rub you down with salt myself afterwards."

Poor little Ninny felt at that moment as if he should feel particularly obliged to any gentleman who would cut his throat, or administer a dose of prussic acid, and put him out of the way of the miseries *in prospectu*.

"Now, sir, take the pen again, and write down your duties as my fag."

Ninny did take the pen, though he could scarcely hold it; his hand trembled so much, and for some seconds the paper was invisible to him, from the tears, which, in spite of his efforts to restrain them, gushed from his eyes.

Black Jack took no notice of this, but went on very coolly:—  
"At five o'clock (it was the depth of winter) you'll get up, go down to the pump, and fill my ewer and kettle, and put the kettle on to boil; clean my shoes, and your own; brush the clothes; clean the knives and forks, and get my breakfast ready; tea, and lots of toast. Then, after breakfast, wash up the things, and put them away; dry my towel, wash my gloves and hair-brushes; scour the kettles—if you have no sand, you must 'tib out' for some, and mind you ain't caught at it, or you'll be flogged; then get your lessons, and go into school; after school, come and see what I want; and after afternoon school, get dinner and have your frying-pan and gridiron ready to cook extras, and mind you crib a double share of potatoes from the kitchen; wait on me at dinner, and what's left you may eat yourself. After dinner, clean up, put candles in my study, and get boiling water and every requisite for tea; after that you'll only have to clean up every thing, 'tib out' for sausages and liquors; make punch, fry the sausages, clean the fryingpan, do your exercise, learn

your repetition, and go to bed—after you have warmed mine by lying in it one hour.”

Ninny was too much astounded to speak—he stared with astonishment to think that he, whose every want and wish had been anticipated, and who had never done the slightest thing for himself, should be compelled to do what his father’s footman would have disdained to do! He made up his mind to complain to Dr. Worthy—but, upon consulting with some of the under boys (who, after teasing and quizzing him a little, were tolerably kind to him), found that such a course would only subject him to rougher usage, as it was “the custom” of the school, and the upper forms were jealous of their “privileges.” “Besides,” said a little urchin, about his own age, “it’s only for three or four years, and then I shall have a fag of my own, and won’t I lick him, that’s all? It’s all nothing when you’re used to it, and if you don’t mind chapped hands, and can *crib* well—you’ll get lots of ‘tucks out’ for yourself—I do at least.”

Supper-time arrived, and Ninny was pleased to see a pewter plate, with a large piece of bread and a slice of cheese set before him, and, as soon as Latin grace was over, was going to commence operations, for he was very hungry, when his little friend, Ox-towne, the lad that was anticipating the pleasure of licking his fag in a few years’ time, informed him he must take it up to the high-table, to his master, *and if any was left*, after it was toasted, he might have it, “only when you get your hack-knife,” he added, in a whisper, “you can cut a bit off as you go up in the crowd. See here—I’ve got a slice,” and he showed a corner crust, which he slipped into his gown-sleeve pocket. Ninny got two crusts and a rind of cheese, as his share of the leavings, but being a new boy, a subscription was made for him by his fellow fags, and he got enough to satisfy his hunger.

After supper, prayers were read, and the under boys sent to bed, though they did not want much sending as the night was the only period that relieved them from the tyranny and oppression of their masters. I do not mean their *school*-masters, but their fagging masters.

Poor Ninny found himself in a long dormitory, with single stump-bedsteads, for twenty-five or thirty, ranged on each side of it, like those in soldiers’ barracks, with a coarse but comfortable horse cloth upon each, in place of a counterpane. In the middle of the floor of the dormitory was placed a solitary dip-candle, by the light of which the boys had to scramble into bed in one minute—the exact time allowed by the monitor whose duty it was to see them in bed, and the candle removed.

Ninny managed to strip somehow, but, when he attempted to get into bed in the dark, was surprised to find that he could not get his feet lower than about half a yard. He was very much

puzzled, and began to fancy that the bed was too small for him, when he heard a general titter, which expanded *gradatim* into a loud laugh, and little Oxtowne, who slept next to him, told him, in a whisper, "it was only an apple-pie." Ninny was as wise as ever, but his new ally stepped out of bed, and put it right for him, in a few minutes, in spite of the shoes that were hurled at his head from all quarters of the room.

After a great many stories had been told, about what they had done in the holidays at home—long descriptions given of new ponies, saddles, whips, boots, and other matters in which school-boys delight—silence ensued; broken only by the light breathings, or murmured whisperings of the little sleepers; and, oh that night!—the silence of that night to poor Augustus! He lay, worn out and fatigued by his journey, his limbs were wearied, and he could not resist closing his eyes, yet he could not sleep—he felt as though his heart would break, and a sensation as of choking rose in his throat. He thought of his home—his indulgent father—his kind, his much-loved mother. He felt in their fullest force all the kindnesses and attentions that had been lavished upon him by every one—even the lowest menial in his father's house—and now how gladly would he have changed situations with him, to see even those dear faces that he had left behind. And where was he now? Lying in a bed inferior to the lowest servant's at his home, a stranger amidst strangers—weak and delicate, and yet exposed to the merciless power of boys who cared not for his sufferings, provided their fancied wants were all supplied; and who seemed to have forgotten that they had ever been subjected to the same treatment themselves.

Oh! that night!—that miserable night!—he resolved to write to his parents on the following day, and entreat them to remove him at once from a place wherein he expected only misery, and he made up his mind, if his request was refused, to run away, and seek upon the sea an escape from the only ills he had as yet experienced.

Sleep, however, at last came to shed its healing balsam on his wounded spirit. His sobs arose less frequently, and at length ceased entirely. But though the body was at rest, the mind was still active. He dreamed. He was in his father's halls—well-known, long-remembered faces met his view, and gazed on him with looks of affection and kindness—the very dogs seemed to look at him as though they loved him. Then there were his favourite toys—his arrows and his crossbow—the ship which he had rigged himself, and been so proud of, all were there. His mother, too, and his father, stood there viewing his skill with fond admiration, and showing their approval by the fond caress. His nurse, and even Lady Skinnykin, whose hitherto detested endearments he had

avoided, now seemed objects worthy of his warmest greetings. Then the table, the well-known table, appeared before him, covered with the choicest wines, the daintiest fruits and sweetmeats—oh! how they relished! surely they had never tasted so sweet, so good before!

With the changeable nature of a dream, these pleasing visions fled, and in their place appeared the scenes he had viewed during this, his first day of "life in a public school." He was again before a hundred strange, inquisitive, malicious-looking little eyes—again was he questioned, laughed and sneered at—again was he in his master's study, his money taken from him, and his hair pulled from his head by the roots. Again—but fortunately he was roused from his feverish sleep by Black Jack, who, taking the bolster from under his head, and shaking the feathers all into one end, very scientifically, proceeded to thrash him severely with it for forgetting to warm his bed.

"Jump up, you little varmint; cut *down* stairs, into the *upper* dormitory, find out my bed, and lie there till I come and relieve you."

Ninny sprang out, and was no sooner on his feet than he was "cut off" them again by a well-directed blow of the bolster, just below the knee.

Little Oxtowne grumbled, "Shame!" for which he got a bolstering, which lasted until his tormentor was obliged to cease for want of breath; and the noise of his victim's screams brought up the monitor, who happened to be the pedigree-keeper, Mr. Tittleback, and hated black Jack as much as one boy could hate another—whose father's name was not in the red book, at least not the same name as his son's—who derived his from his mother, for reasons that may better be conceived than explained.

Tittleback demanded the meaning of the disturbance, to which Mr. Jack made no other reply, but a contemptuous grin and a shake of the bolster.

Little Oxtowne told the monitor, at his request, all the circumstances, and how Jack had taken all Ninny's money from him, and was going to make a warming-pan of him the *first* night, which was against the rules.

Upon inquiring into the truth of the money part of the story, and finding it perfectly correct, Tittleback summoned a *concio* of the fifth and sixth, and it was agreed *nem. con.* that Black Jack had been guilty of dirty, sneaking, and mean conduct, which required and called for a severe cobbing. This was accordingly inflicted immediately *à la* Lynch, and the culprit retired to his bed (unaired) with his body covered with the marks of ashen sticks, and his mind full of schemes of vengeance on the innocent head of the poor Honourable Augustus Noodledoodle Nincompoop.

How he executed them will be seen hereafter.

## CHAPTER XI.

LONG before the dawn, the Hon. Augustus was roused from his sleep by the man whose duty it was to call the boys in the morning, supply them with a dip to get up by, light the hall-fire, and manufacture the birch-rods. Practice makes perfect, and Manning—for so this official was named—prided himself on the perfection to which he had brought the building of birches.

"Here's a rail beauty!" he would exclaim, eyeing one of his own productions with a scientific look, "jist try the handle on him—firm but springy—spreads out like a fantailed pigeon—beautiful, isn't it? I'll pound him to draw blood first cut."

These observations were mercilessly made to the individual who was about to expiate some offence upon "the block," as the flogging-stool was called, and made him feel remarkably comfortable, of course.

But to return to our hero; he got up and dressed himself as quickly as possible, and, under the guidance of his friend Oxtowne, proceeded to execute the duties required of him as a fag. The ewer and kettle were easily filled, considering the darkness of the morning, but the shoes, and knives and forks, required more skill in polishing than Ninny was possessed of; and he was obliged to appeal to his friends for their assistance. This they would readily have granted had not their own work prevented them, for each had quite as much to do as he could manage, before his master got up. Ninny, therefore, was forced to do as well as he could by imitating the others, and contrived to knock the skin off his knuckles without producing any thing like a polish on the shoes, and to run the prongs of the forks into his fingers, in his clumsy attempts to remove the grease and dirt. The pain, though severe, might not have produced tears, had it not been for the comforting remark of Oxtowne, who, after inspecting his work, observed,

"You call that a polish, do you? I would not be in your place—that's all. Black Jack will half murder you."

"I *can't* do them any better," cried Ninny, the tears, which he could no longer control, streaming from his eyes.

"We never have the *can't's* here, and so you'll find before long," said his friend. "But it's of no use to stand there blubbering, it only wants ten minutes to seven, and you must call your master, as we go in directly the clock strikes.—I'm off, so come along."

He wiped away his tears, forgetting that the hands which were employed in that operation were covered with blacking and blood, a considerable portion of which was transferred to his face, and



gave him the appearance of a halfwashed chimneysweeper. In this trim he proceeded to the dormitory, and in fear and trembling, shook his master's shoulder to rouse him from his slumbers.

"What o'clock is it, you honourable little vagabond?" inquired Black Jack.

"Nearly seven, I believe," answered Ninny.

"You *believe*, sirrah! What do you mean by that? Have not you got a watch?"

Ninny replied, by pulling out of his fob a very handsome gold hunting-watch, which his father, by the advice of Lady Skinnykin, had purchased for him a few days before.

"Just five minutes to seven," said his master, snatching the watch from him, and throwing it at his head. He avoided the blow by what is called *ducking*, and the watch flew down the dormitory, and was broken into fragments at the further end of the room.

This, of course, caused a considerable degree of uneasiness in the mind of its owner, as the possession of a watch is looked upon by puerilities as the first approach to manhood—at least a watch that will *go*—which this did, a great deal further than its maker ever intended.

"I'll write home to my father," cried Ninny, "and tell him about your behaviour."

"Oh, you will! will you?" said his master. "Now I'll give you a bit of advice—never open your mouth, except when you are at meals. Now pick up the pieces of your timekeeper, and give me my shoes."

Ninny executed the first order very willingly, but felt somewhat backward in obeying the second, inasmuch as the shine was not such as to merit the wearer's approbation; the shoes, however, were produced, and the moment the "dulness of their lustre" met the master's eye, he shied both of them deliberately at the bearer's head, and jumping up, seized a towel, and dipped one corner of it into a basin of water, and then, giving it a scientific twist or two, brought it into the form of a solid ropeyarn, and telling Ninny to pull up his trousers at the bottom, so as to expose the calf, "flicked it into him," until he drew blood.

This novel mode of punishment produced extraordinary samples of activity in the operatee; for he jumped up from the floor, at every cut, higher than he himself thought possible, and the roars elicited might have been envied by the strongest bull in the neighbouring market.

"Now, you honourable little vagabond, how is it that your face is so detestably dirty? I'll show you up for being filthy."

"I cut—cut—cut my hands, in trying to clean the knives and forks, and knocked the skin off my knuckles in trying to clean the

shoes; and then I cried, and then I wiped off the tears with my dirty hands."

"Ah, that's all very well—I shall show you up for dirtiness," answered his master; "give me a slip of paper."

Now Ninny had no paper, because his boxes were all at the matron's; but he told his friend Oxtowne of his difficulties, who relieved them by tearing out the blank leaf of the first new book he met with, which Ninny bore, in triumph, to his tormentor.

"Now, sir, write down, while I dictate—'A. N. Nincompoop, for being dirty,' and wash your face if you dare."

Ninny complied, and with this document his master, after receiving the books he wanted, repaired to the school-room, and waited at the door, until the cries of "All in—all in," brought out Dr. Worthy, the head-master, to whom the show-up was handed; and as soon as prayers were over, Ninny was called up, amongst the other fifty or sixty shown-ups, to put in his defence to the action brought against him.

"Plead your first offence," whispered Oxtowne.

"How am I to do it?" inquired Ninny.

"Oh! merely say, 'first fault.'"

"First fault!" screamed out the poor boy, at the top of his voice, which elicited a roar from all the other boys.

"Who's that?" replied the doctor, waiting, to the annoyance of the seventeenth or eighteenth culprit, between the second and third cut.

"Me, sir," said Ninny.

"Who is that ungrammatical delinquent?" inquired Dr. Worthy, of one of the under-masters.

"A new boy. I don't know him," was the reply.

"Come hither, sirrah! Who are you?"

"The Honourable Au—Aug—gust—ust—us Nood—Noodle—oodle—doodle Nin—in—com—poop."

"Be concise, sir, and confine yourself to the ultimate of your nomenclature in future. For what are you shown up?"

"Noth—noth—nothing, Mr. Doctor."

"Let me see the list," said the doctor to the monitor, who had the boy's head, who was undergoing his punishment on the block, between his legs.

"Ah! I see. For being dirty. A very serious offence,—but as it's your first fault you are excused. Return to your seat, and remember that any inattention to personal purification, in future, will be visited with due severity."

No criminal ever received a reprieve with greater joy than did poor Ninny, whose nerves were sadly unstrung by seeing the punishment of birching inflicted on those who had been "shown up" with himself, but who, as soon as it was over, returned to

their places, and gave the piece of Indian-rubber, or the leaden bullet, which was used to bite at, to prevent their crying out, to the next floggee, as coolly as if nothing had happened.

To recount the miseries to which Ninny was subjected, through the tyranny of his master, for the first week, would be impossible. So wretched was he, that he got up one morning, and resolved to run away. All his money was gone, and he had on the school-dress, which was, most probably, invented with the same object as the prison dresses are now—to prevent the escape of the wearer by its peculiar appearance. In our gaols the dress is generally a motley of yellow and blue, but at Rotherwick it consisted of a sort of groom's dress, of coarse black "knees," and a jacket of the same, over which, in school-hours, a gown was worn, something like a B.A.'s at Oxford, only made up of coarse cloth. The legs being exposed, without any other covering than a pair of cotton or worsted stockings, were generally protected by what were called "footballs;" that is, a pair of ribbed men's worsted hose, with the feet cut off, and confined under the shoe by a strap like a gaiter, reaching half-way up the thigh. In this dress, and an old hat of Manning's, which he cribbed out of the beer-cellar, and made to fit his little head by sticking his pocket-handkerchief on his forehead, Ninny ran off to the nearest coachstand, and calling a jarvey, requested him to give him a "long shilling's-worth towards North Wales," much to the amusement of the waterman, who, recognising the livery of Rotherwick, seized the runaway by the collar, and conveyed him, in spite of his energetic kickings and strugglings, back again to school, for which he got half-a-crown from the master, and a good ducking, under a powerful two-handed pump, from the boys.

"Ninny was, of course, soundly flogged for attempting to escape, much to the delight of Black Jack, his master, who resolved to render him, if possible, more miserable than he was before.

Ninny unfortunately betrayed a talent for singing, and one of the new tortures put into practice against him was making him get upon one hob of the large hall-fire and sing duets with any other unlucky vocalist who happened to be at hand, from amidst the smoke and soot which was made to descend upon them by shouting loudly up the chimney. The next day he was invariably shown up, and as invariably flogged, for "a want of attention to his personal purifications."

Another pleasant occupation was having to jump two or three feet from the ground, and then to be knocked down by his master, who stood upon a form for the purpose. This was called "tipping a neat swinger," and was a fashionable amusement with the bullies of the day.

But the most annoying employment of all was the being obliged to clean the cooking apparatus. This was a very simple one, con-

sisting merely of a washhand-basin and a fork. It was used in this way : Sausages were the favourite dish for supper with the Rotherwickians. A string of these was suspended from the fork before the hall-fire, and the fat which oozed out in the process of roasting them was caught on a toast, which was placed for that purpose in the bottom of the basin, which did duty as dripping-pan. These were exceedingly good, and very much relished, but they left an incrustation on the basin, which was to return to its legitimate use on the following morning, that caused a great deal of trouble and inconvenience to the fags. To remove the mass of burnt grease with cold pump-water only was impossible; and if a speck was left upon the basin, a severe thrashing was the consequence. When sausages were "in," chapped hands were plentiful—indeed you could always tell the sausage season by inspecting the hands of the juniors, because the only means of removing the grease was by plucking up a turf or root of grass, with the dirt adhering to it, and scrubbing away in the cold water with it for half an hour.

One day, after he had been at school for about a month, and had written home several doleful epistles to his father, all of which, by the advice of Lady Skinnykin, had been kept from Lady Fuddlehead, and taken no notice of whatever, Ninny was surprised and delighted at the receipt of a large basket. The contents were an exceedingly nice cake from Mrs. Slushem, a bottle of wine from Mr. Nutmegs, the butler, and a letter with a "tip," from Lord Fuddlehead, telling him to send or carry a hare and two brace of woodcocks, which were packed in the bottom of the basket, to Dr. Worthy, with his lordship's compliments.

These presents, however, never reached the doctor; for Black Jack, after taking away the cake and borrowing the "tip," announced his intention of giving a "tuck" with the game. Of course, Ninny dared not expostulate; such a proceeding would not only have been a work of supererogation, but of positive danger. He was ordered to "tib out down the lane" to the Red Cow, and get a bottle of gin, another of brandy, and to borrow something wherewith to stuff the hare. This was a work of danger, because if he were caught "tibbing out," a flogging was the certain result; but the bringing of spirits into Rotherwick, if discovered, would have caused his expulsion from the school. Practice, as I said before, makes perfect, and the little Rotherwickians knew the exact moment to run down to the Red Cow, and get in again through the gates without being seen, except by the porter, who knew it was as much as his life was worth to *split*.

The expedition proved successful, with the exception of procuring the stuffing for the hare. Difficulties of that sort, however, are easily got over where the parties are not over-particular. A little bread and butter, which had been prigged at supper-time, were

used as substitutes; the skinning of the animal was a work of time, but was accomplished at last as well as could be expected. As to trussing it, that was quite out of the question, as no skewers were to be had. It was accordingly suspended before the fire, at full length from *the* fork, with its interior crammed with bread and butter; and Ninny had to baste it with a pat of butter which he had concealed in his gown-sleeve pocket. The early part of this basting went on pretty well, but the fire which roasted the hare melted the butter in the pocket, and spoiled the process and the sleeve, for which Ninny got what his master termed "a good licking."

Though the hare looked very much like a cat or a greyhound-puppy, the perfume from it was such as to establish a belief in the expectants that it would prove remarkably good in the eating. To test it, Mr. Peregrine Tittleback took out his hack-knife and cut a slice from the back, pronouncing it to be "uncommon excellent." His example was, of course, followed, and the hare would have disappeared piecemeal without being dished up, had not the fall of the library-ladder, which had been set up as an alarm against Dr. Worthy's private door, given notice of his approach. The string was immediately cut, and the half-roasted animal thrown under the grate, and covered over with ashes and cinders. The fork was abstracted and pocketed, and upon the doctor's entrance, every boy was in his seat, and no signs of illicit cooking visible.

The smell, which was rather powerful, would have excited suspicion in any other individual but the doctor, whose nose, from indulging in copious and frequent pinches of snuff, was more ornamental than useful. After he had called over names and sent the juniors to bed, he returned to his house, and the hare was dug out of the cinders, and, after being carefully washed in a toe-tub and scraped with a knife, was hung up again, and, when roasted, eaten with a great relish. The woodcocks were then substituted, the potatoes fried in the fire-shovel, which had been previously cleaned out with a nail-brush, and a most excellent supper was made, and washed down with several *bowls* of punch, which bowls were nothing but washing-basins.

The relics of the tuck, consisting principally of bones closely picked, were kindly given to Ninny, who, like a fool or a new boy, which is much the same thing, carried them into his dormitory, intending to eat them in bed; but in less than half a minute, a general rush took place, and a general scramble, which left him without even a taste of his honourable father's present.

This little treat suggested to the under-boys the necessity and propriety of having a tuck themselves. In the stableyard of Rotherwick, the groom kept a few dingy-looking drackle-tailed hens and ducks. Oxtowne undertook to steal and prepare a couple of each of these, and get them cooked at the Red Cow. He watched the

groom out to exercise, and then, after a long chase round the yard, succeeded in knocking four on the head with a hocky-stick. He tied them with his handkerchief round his waist behind him, and, putting his gown over them, got them safely to the Red Cow.

At nine at night, after prayers, they were handed in one by one through the bars of the window, with sundry pots of porter, and carried up to the dormitory. Unfortunately, Black Jack went up to give his sag his nightly bolstering, just as a bedstead was being converted into the supper-table, with a dirty sheet spread upon it or a cloth. This was enough to convince him that a tuck was going on, though he could not see the dishes, for the boys had jumped into bed and hidden them under the clothes. A discovery was made, in consequence of Oxtowne's having put one of the red-hot ducks into Ninny's bed, and scalding him so severely, that he screamed out and threw the offending scavenger on the floor. Information was given to the upper-boys — the provisions were all seized, and, after the culprits had been punished by a general bolstering, eaten by the monitors, who showed their gratitude for the treat, by showing up the boys in the morning, and having them logged for "tipping out down the lane."

I will not dwell longer on the various scrapes and difficulties into which the innocence and ignorance — *freshness*, as we term those combined qualities at Oxford — led Augustus; nor need I further explain the excellency of the educational system pursued at Rotherwick, for enlarging the mind in the sciences of cookery and shoe-blackery; suffice it to say, that, by the end of the first "half," he made considerable progress in those necessary arts, which, excepting at Rotherwick and other public schools, are generally profitably pursued by individuals beneath the grade of gentlemen. As to his progress in learning, let that pass for the present *sub silentio*, as his studies had as yet been prudently confined to the rudiments of the Eton grammar. How he had improved in manners and morality, will be best shown by giving an account of what occurred at the mansion of Lord Wastepaper, his patron, on the first day of his first holidays.

His lordship was a great man in his way, and his greatness never developed itself so greatly as it did when he attended on "governors' day," as one of the trustees of Rotherwick. Upon that "great important day" he made a point of displaying all the ribbons and stars which he was entitled to wear, in order to astonish all the little gown-boys who were drawn up at the entrance of the governors'-room, for the purpose of welcoming their patrons and asking for a holiday, and who, having strong notions of what aristocracy meant, despised every body below a duke and a prime minister.

When, therefore, Lord Wastepaper descended from his carriage in all his glories of full dress and orders, he was highly gratified by

hearing the little boys exclaim, "A holiday, *your grace!* — a holiday, *your grace!* and, in the plentitude of his delight, grasped his little *protégé* Ninny — taking care to give him his title at full length — by the hand, and insisted on his passing one day with him before he went down into Wales. One minute later, and the invitation would not have been given; as, before his lordship got many paces along the line, he heard Mr. Peregrine Tittleback promise Ninny and his friends "a —— good licking for calling that absurd little, overdressed individual, *his grace*, when they ought to have known that he was *only a viscount.*"

I must observe, parenthetically, that, as soon as all the noble governors were safely ensconced in their room, and busied in forming plans for the better instruction and moral improvement of the youths, those youths were endeavouring to improve themselves by learning to drive the governors' carriages round an adjoining square, and treating the coachmen and flunkies to pots of porter at the Red Cow; of course, reserving to themselves the honour of "taking the head off" each pot, as the first *swig* was classically termed. The result, as may be expected, was, that the speed of the horses which drew the respective turns-out was tried, and a proper emulation excited, which terminated in "shocking accidents," such as broken-knees, smashed panels, and a "distressing state of the poles."

But to proceed—the holidays arrived, and Ninny, laying aside the school-dress, resumed with joy his "home clothes," the aforementioned blues, with yellow basket-buttons, which had been furbished up to last him till he got home; though he had grown so much in the six months, that they did not fit him enough, and left his wrists and ankles inelegantly exposed to the gaze of the passers-by. He was not so much annoyed by the passengers as he might have been, had it been later in the day; for his impatience to leave Rotherwick had induced him to get up at four o'clock in the morning, and to present himself at Lord Wastepaper's door, in the fashionable and lazy quarters of Grosvenor Square, before the neighbouring clocks struck five, which they all made a point of doing within a quarter of an hour of each other after his arrival. This interval he occupied in standing on tiptoe, and knocking as well as he could to gain admission; but, finding that Grosvenorian domestics were not inclined to prove the truth of the scriptural assertion, he proceeded to try the advantage of the "knock and ring" system, which he had seen strongly recommended on some of the doors as he passed along. The first pull at the huge handle produced an animal in a livery, which he thought was a very queer one for a page to a viscount. The little urchin who opened the area-door was not only dressed in black, but had also a very black face, except round the region of his mouth, which seemed to have

been robbed of its nigerity, by an enormous slice of bread and butter, which he was munching, and which bore deeply-imprinted proofs that his hands were as black as his face, which was not surprising, as he had just descended the flue of his lordship's kitchen-chimney.

"Vell! vot are you arter, my rummy von, avaking all the hardvurked 'mestics o' this ere werry respectibul hestablishment, at this hunconshus hour o' the day?" inquired this specimen of that interesting class—the climbing-boys.

"I'm come to dine and spend the day with Lord Wastepaper," replied Ninny, "and I want to be let in."

"Don't you vish you may?" said chummy, with a grin which displayed a splendid set of grinders, which proved the superiority of carbon as a dentifrice.

"Yes, I do; and if you have any more of your impudence, I'll give you a good thrashing, you little dirty—"

Chummy interrupted this speech by first turning and knocking the soot out of the "western" side of his trousers, and then putting his thumb to his nose, and twiddling his four fingers energetically, at the same time assuring him that "no respectibul person ever thowt of touching a chummy, for fear 'o being 'taminated 'sept upon Mayday, ven ve's softsoaped and hearthstoned on purpose."

Ninny was going to prove that this rule, like most others, is provided with an exception, but, upon trying the iron-gate, found it was locked, at which chummy redoubled his antics.

"Tell the servant I want to speak to him, and I'll give you sixpence," said Ninny, willing to try another tack.

"Chuck un down, then," replied the sweeper. And as soon as he had picked it up and rung it on the stone steps to ascertain that it was not a "smasher's tanner," he pocketed it, and observed,

"Vy, as to the servants, as you calls the gentlemen and ladies as is members of this society, every vun o' them is jist as fast as that ere lock as you couldn't undo. There's no vun up down below but my master, as is a haven of his breakfast in the pantenny."

"Who let you in, then?" inquired Ninny.

"No vun—we allys lets ourselves in—least ways sich tip-top uns as us, as can be trusted not to bone the moveables. Cook gis master the hary key last thing at night arter the governor's gone to roost, and a good blow-out in the morning, cos she don't like to be woke out of her sleep at onlady-like hours."

"What the deuce am I to do then?" asked Ninny.

"Vy, if I was you, I'd cut up to Islington brick-fields, or Copemhagem House, and have an hour or two's fun at pelling the frogs in the ponds—there's lots about there—I've had some rare sport—that's to say of a hevening; but I must cut too; master's



chock-full by this, and will hollar arter me, and I shall get larruped for not filling the sut-bag."

Ninny was left to his own resources, and, instead of following the advice of chumtmy, inquired his way to the parks, and seeing other gentlemen amusing them by bathing in the Serpentine, thought he could not do better than follow their example. Observing a man near a boat that was curiously fitted up with ropes, hooks, and poles, he inquired "if it was deep just there?"

The "royal humane" assured him it was perfectly safe, and quite shallow all along his beat. Ninny therefore undressed, and jumped fearlessly in, though he was like those gentlemen who "took a boat and went to Philippi," and could not swim. Down he went, much deeper than he expected, and when he rose to the surface and found he could not touch ground, he began kicking and screaming most drowningly.

This was enough for the "humane." He called loudly for "help!—a boy drowned;" but before assistance could arrive, he contrived to drag Ninny out with a boathook, as he was determined to win the society's medal, for which he had entered himself.

A large crowd was of course collected, who all declared that he was a noble fellow for saving the boy's life, and had no doubt that if he took him home to his friends he would be "handsomely rewarded."

Upon finding that he was an honourable, and on a visit to a lord, these doubts were settled, and several of the society's men were anxious to assist in the matter of conveying him home; but as that was against the rules, Ninny was put into a hackney-coach with the benevolent individual who had so heroically saved his life, and who received a five-pound note for his exertions from Lord Wastepaper, and the promise of a recommendation for the society's gold medal.

The man wisely employed a gentleman of the press to communicate the "narrow escape from a dreadful death by drowning, and the meritorious conduct of one of the officers employed by the Royal Humane Society," to the newspapers, and reaped the fruits of the information with which the paragraph concluded—"the name of the man who thus saved, at the risk of his own valuable life—for he has a wife and seven or eight little children—the heir to a noble house, is, we hear, Simon Sharpe, living at No 6, Johnson's-buildings, Edgeware Road."

At breakfast Ninny contrived to make so very excellent a meal, that his patron began to think a cold-bath beforehand was really very efficacious in procuring an inordinate appetite; but he had not much time to think on the subject, or to talk with his guest, as he was busily engaged in endeavouring to discover in any one of the

morning papers that were placed on the table a notice of the "few remarks he had ventured to make to the House, on the important bill introduced by his noble friend (his bitterest enemy) on the Cross Benches." As he was not successful in finding any thing more than the usual "Lord Wastepaper made some observations, which were inaudible in the gallery, and uttered amidst the noise of all the peers leaving the house," he was not in a very good humour to entertain Augustus; he therefore pleaded "business of great importance;" and gave him a guinea to go and see the Panorama, or any lion he thought fit, with a strict injunction to be in by six o'clock, ready to dress for dinner.

Ninny, however, spent the greater part of the morning in Grosvenor-mews with his lordship's coachman, who, excepting the landlord of the Red Cow, was the only person in London with whom he was upon intimate terms. In the afternoon, this worthy, who happened to be off duty that day, took the boy, as the greatest treat he could give him, to the Fives Court, for the benefit of his morals and Bill Eales, whose friends—admirers of the art of self-defence—had agreed to assemble on that day, to compensate him for being soundly thrashed by Mr. John Scroggins. Here Ninny was introduced to the heroes of the prize-ring, and had the honour of being told that he would one day or other do credit to the P. C.—(an hieroglyphic that stands for the Pugilistic Club as well as for the Privy Council) if he would only put himself under a good tutor immediately, and train regularly.

When the sets-to were ended, an adjournment took place to a public kept by one of the Fancy—*un homme de l'imagination*, as our neighbours translate it—who was called by the family cognomen, or rather agnomen, of "Uncle Ben," where Ninny was greatly edified by an exhibition of fighting-dogs, and an exposition of their pluck and weight. This was diversified by a lecture on fighting-cocks, by a lover of that innocent amusement, and a description of a prize-fight, in which one man had been killed on the spot and his antagonist maimed for life. With these little amusements, a few flash songs, and sundry pots of porter—heavy, I beg pardon—the afternoon passed very rapidly and pleasantly.

When he returned to my lord's, and dinner was announced, Ninny felt the effects of the porter, just sufficiently to do away with any little shyness that a Rotherwickian of only six months' standing might have felt, on being introduced to a small party of seven honourable gentlemen, six of whom were perfect strangers to him, and eyed his shrunken blues, with bright basket-buttons, rather suspiciously, if not contemptuously; but dropped all signs of wonder, when they were informed by Lord Wastepaper that he was a Rotherwickian, and just going home for the holidays.

At dinner our hero took wine with every body, and ate surpris-

ingly—to those, at least, who had forgotten how little they had to eat while fags.

After dinner, his lordship thinking, from the way his tongue was beginning to run, that the sooner he had his one glass of wine, and was despatched to bed, the better it would be for the character of Rotherwick, asked him, “if he would take one more glass of Madeira?”

“No, thank you, old boy,” replied Ninny; “it strikes me as rather acid—I’ll try four or five of your port, as a foundation for the claret.”

This answer produced, at first, a stare at the little wretch, and then, as it was a bachelor-party, a loud laugh, in which the cause of it joined most heartily.

One of the party, a notorious wag, began, much to the annoyance of his lordship, to draw the boy out; and, by supplying him with wine, obtained a rich description of the modes of thinking and acting at Rotherwick.

On the subject of the way in which he had passed the day, Ninny had learned his lesson—never to turn informer—too well, to say one word, though the wag strongly suspected he could “get a rise” out of him on that score.

At last the wine began to operate in the usual way, and at a signal from his lordship, the butler removed the unwilling guest from the table; who, upon retreating, as well as he could articulate, assured his friends, that “he had never met such a set of regular trumps in his life.”

On his return home, Lady Fuddlehead was so much shocked by the change for the worse that had, as she thought, taken place in her son, that she almost resolved not to send him back again. But in this she was overruled by Lady Skinnykin, who assured her, that “all would be set right by the time he got into the fifth form;” and by Slushem, the nurse, who asserted, that “she never did, in the ole cwerse of her life—no, never—see such an impruvment in any young gentleman; there wasn’t a maid in the establishment that he hadn’t something to say to, as set ’em giggling and laughing the ole day—he was *so* witty, and *so* larned!”

As his father thought but little about it, and cared less, after the holidays Ninny returned to school, with an enlarged tip, and a supply of adventures, to record to his friends. As for fagging, he cared but little about it now, and knew how to take pretty good care of himself, by dint of cribbing and shirking.

Things, therefore, went on pretty much the same for the next two years. He gained two removes; and could, by exchanging a share of pudding or pie, get a respectable copy of verses done—for him. At that period an event occurred, which caused a great sensation, and a still greater alteration in the school.

Dr. Worthy retired from the head-mastership, with the good wishes of all his pupils, and a large service of plate, with which they presented him; but, better than all, with a good living, and a comfortable feeling, that he had emancipated himself from that most horrible of all slaveries—the situation of schoolmaster.

“Delightful task,” etc. he would quote over his port, and offer any odds the lines were never written by a pedagogue.

He was succeeded by Mr. Innovate, a young man who had gained the highest honours in Oxford, which were so seldom gained in those days, as to ensure the gainer of them promotion—provided he was well born, and better patronised. This was the case with Mr. Innovate, who, after taking his double first, was appointed private tutor in the family of a nobleman, who had great influence with the trustees of Rotherwick, on the foundation of which he had been educated. In the language of the turf, he “distanced the whole lot” of his competitors, and entered on his duties with zeal, if not with discretion. He wisely thought that the shoe-and-knife-cleaning-department might be advantageously transferred from the young gentlemen, to hired servants, and, resolving to “*reform* it altogether,” scheduled the tea-kettles, frying-pans, knife-boards, and bath-bricks. He also forbade the use of living warming-pans, and interdicted cooking sausages, and bolstering. The windows too were so closely barred, that all chance of introducing hot ducks and porter from the “Red Cow” was done away with. If any boy was caught out in “libbing out down the lane,” the master was flogged for it instead of the fag—which soon put an end to the system.

He might possibly have stopped there, and permitted fagging to go on, as far as running about went, fagging out at cricket, and getting a little water from the pump, had not the cruel conduct of Black Jack, who was now captain in gown-boys, come to his ears.

This nice youth, who never shared in any of the manly games of the place, used to amuse himself by torturing the little boys in the most ingenious ways. His great delight was to spoil their watches, stick cobblers' wax into their hair, or cut it off closely on *one* side of their heads; blow pepper into their eyes; and destroy the foul copies of their verses or exercises, just as they were going to copy them out fair; in short, there was nothing which was calculated to annoy another, that he was not *au fait* at discovering and executing.

He was hated most cordially by his juniors, and cut by his equals in age, who never noticed him but to protect some little fellow, when they could discover he was bullying him, which was not often, as they dared not complain, and his torturing was done whilst most of the boys were out playing at cricket, hockey, or tennis.

One little lad, for bullying whom he had been, deservedly, se-

verely beaten, was forced to plead æger, and was sent to the matron's, which was used as a sort of infirmary. When the physician arrived, he found the glands on each side of his throat frightfully swollen, and marks of severe bruises on the back of his neck. He was very ill, but refused to give any account of his bruises.

He said he *dared* not do so; but he allowed that the cold and fever, under which he was suffering, were probably caused by his having poured water into his shoes on purpose to make himself ill, that he might be sent home to his friends. He was sent home, and, when he was, as he thought, dying on his mother's bosom, he revealed to her that the cause of the injuries about his neck and throat was Black Jack's having taken him by both his ears, and beaten his head for several minutes against one of the windows in the cloisters, because he had refused to let him see a letter which he had written home, and which he fancied contained an account of his being so shamefully bullied by him as to call for the intercession of his schoolfellows.

The boy recovered, but refused to return to school while Black Jack was in it. A friend informed Mr. Innovate of all the circumstances, and he immediately made up his mind to give the wretch the option of being soundly flogged, or taking his name off the books—knowing full well that his cowardly nature would lead him to prefer expulsion—for such it was virtually—to corporeal suffering. He accordingly “accepted the Chilterns, and vacated his seat,” amidst the hootings, hissings, and maledictions of the boys.

Mr. Innovate made the brutality of Black Jack an excuse for doing away with the systems of fagging and bullying altogether. Sweeping measures were resolved upon, and, as he was a new broom, he determined to sweep very clean. The name of fag was abolished—the monitors were changed into præpositi, and the office no longer confined to the boys of the sixth form, but conferred on the senior in each class. The schell was also scheduled, the name of *forms* changed into classes, and the order of them reversed, so that what was the honourable sixth form, was altered to the hitherto dishonourable first class. Flogging also was abolished, except for heinous offences.

The boys did not at all relish these changes, but the novelty of the thing amused them, and they might probably have been reconciled to them after a little while, had not the well-meant but mistaken zeal of the head-master carried him on to a most absurd extent.

The “education of the working-classes” was at this time a favourite topic—a hobby, as Sterne would call it—with certain individuals, within and without the walls of Parliament. Public meetings were held, long speeches delivered, and powerful treatises written on the important subject; and amongst the most zealous

and persevering advocates for a change in the "old humdrum system," and the macadamization of a new road to wisdom, were two gentlemen, neither of whom had the honour of a seat in the house.

Each of these had a system of his own, which, of course, was the most efficacious that ever was invented, and each endeavoured to convince the other of the fact. In this it is needless to say he did not succeed. The public were divided on the subject. Some advocated the system of Dr. Tintinabulum, but the majority favoured the scheme of Mr. Lackteacher, because it was rather the more absurd and expensive of the two. Some gentleman having classically remarked that "the proof of a pudding is in the eating of it," it was agreed that a subscription should be raised, and both plans put upon their trial. A committee was appointed, the members of which were to act as a jury, and give a verdict according to the evidence—or their own prejudices ;—as to a judge of the case, they had not one among them.

At these meetings Mr. Innovate was a constant attendant, and took a prominent part in the discussions that arose. He was listened to with great attention, because his speeches super-abounded with Latin and Greek quotations, of which the greater part of his admiring hearers did not understand one word. After assigning a great many strong reasons why he should *not* do so, he declared his preference for the plans of Dr. Tintinabulum, and his determination to introduce it into his own school of Rotherwick. This declaration was received with "deafening cheers" by the Tintinabularians, which were increased to roars of delight when the doctor sprang upon the platform, and embraced the convert to his system. The Lackteacherians were chapfallen, and left the room with unpleasant feelings of all-no-howishness.

After many interviews and much discussion between the doctor and his pupil, the plan intended for national schools, and others of the same grade, was supposed to be matured for and applicable to the sons of noblemen and gentlemen. It was a comfortable plan for the undermasters, who had nothing to do but to walk up and down the school-room, as their duties of teaching and correcting exercises were transferred to the præpositus of each class, under the superintendence of the head-master.

If hard working could have ensured success. Mr. Innovate ought to have succeeded, for no man ever worked harder than he did. All day long he was engaged in "drill-drill-drilling" the boys, and teaching them to walk two-and-two into school; to sit down all together at the wave of his hand downwards, and to rise again at the same minute, on the signal given by a wave upwards. Then the orders "handle your books," "open your books," and "begin construing," were expected to be executed simultaneously. All

this was great fun for the boys, and shortened their lessons very much, as they committed a great many blunders on purpose to prolong the exercise.

His nights must have been occupied in writing and preparing grammars and books to supersede the Eton grammars, and the *selectæ* of the "old humdrum system;" and how he found time for half that he got through was a matter of surprise to every one. His exertions were crowned with success in one respect—he doubled the number of his pupils, and, as a natural consequence, the amount of his "peculium;" for, many persons being given to a love of change, sent their sons to be experimented upon in this "short cut" to classical knowledge from which they gained "no returns."

As the old boys went away, and the new ones succeeded, the difficulties of bringing the new system to perfection were considerably diminished—there were fewer prejudices to be contended with.

Ninny, who liked the system amazingly, as he got all his lessons construed and parsed for him by some other boy—his exercises done from cribs—and his verses from the gradus—was now in the first class, and nearly seventeen years of age. His outside had improved amazingly. He was tall, well-formed, and very strong; a capital boxer and fencer, and celebrated as a cricketer and tennis-player; in short, he was looked upon as a leader in athletics and larks.

At this period Mr. Innovate was convinced that the time had arrived for the completion of all his plans. Red-letter days were no longer to be claimed as holidays; the three half-school days were lengthened into whole school-days: the time formerly devoted to play was to be occupied in perfecting the drilling; football was abolished as dangerous, and the converting of little boys into "horses" was interdicted, and pronounced to be "cruelty to animals." The glories of "governors' day," and the fun of driving carriages and drinking porter at the Red Cow were annihilated, and the singing of *Dulce domum* was as rigidly forbidden among the Rotherwickians, as the *Rangé des vaches* was among the home-loving Swiss—and for the same reasons.

The boys began to grumble and complain in private, and some assured their friends that they would "stand it no longer." Concios at length began to be held of the seniors, the results of which were canvassed in small groups and meetings of the juniors. The ground of complaint was that their *privileges* were interfered with, and the old customs done away. "It was their *privilege* to have three half-holidays in the week; it was their *privilege* to have a whole holiday on saints'-days; it had been the *custom* of the school to attend governors' meetings, drive carriages, and drink porter at the Red Cow; to kick each other's shins at football, flog little boys

in a *team*, and sing *Dulce domum* when and wherever they pleased." It was resolved, *nem. con.*, to maintain their privileges at any risk.

An opportunity soon presented itself for carrying this resolution into effect. The 5th of November was near at hand, and on that day it had been their privilege to have a whole holiday, and a large bonfire, in which to immolate a *guy*.

Mr. Innovate had given public notice that this custom was to be honoured in its breach; that they were to attend chapel twice, instead of having a holiday, and that no bonfires were to be allowed.

A concio was called and held, and every boy pledged himself to maintain the privileges against the laws. They agreed not to go to chapel at all, to get up early, collect the materials, and light up a much larger bonfire than had ever been seen within the walls. A subscription was raised to purchase combustibles, and the plan of proceedings settled.

On the morning of the fifth, Mr. Innovate was deeply engaged in his study, until the bell rang for chapel, in finishing a very interesting discourse, which he intended delivering to his pupils, on the iniquitousness of the attempt of Mr. Fawkes and the conspirators to blow up such a respectable assembly as the house of parliament (I beg pardon for digressing—but they are "blown up" every day now by every body, and no notice taken of it! *tempora mutantur*). With this laboured tirade in his pocket he proceeded to chapel, and as soon as he was in the vestry, putting on his surplice, the chapel-door was locked by our hero, Augustus, who had secreted himself behind it for that purpose.

When Mr. Innovate entered the reading-desk he was surprised to find no one in chapel but "dearly beloved Roger," the clerk. He waited for ten minutes, expecting the boys to come in, and meditating in his mind a suitable punishment for so unjustifiable a delay. He then desired the clerk to go and tell the præpositi to bring the boys in immediately. Roger proceeded to the door, and, to *his* great surprise, found that, like Sterne's starling, "he could not get out." This discovery he communicated to the master, who rushed to ascertain the correctness of it. Repeated trials and a glimpse of the bolt convinced him of the fact—that he, the headmaster of Rotherwick, was locked up against his will, and against all statutes in that case made and provided. He walked round and round the chapel, and examined the windows to find an exit, but without success, as they were very high above the ground to insure the boys not looking *out*, and firmly guarded by iron wire to prevent the cricket-balls from coming *in*.

He puzzled himself for some time to account for his being confined. It never once occurred to him that it was done purposely, and by one of his boys. "They did not *dare* to do such a thing,"



he assured the clerk, when he suggested to him the possibility of such an outrage; "they were under excellent controul." At this instant, before the words were out of his lips, a loud shout rent the air, and immense volumes of smoke were seen rolling along by the chapel-windows.

"Why, they've lit up already!" said Roger.

"Lit up, sirrah! What do you mean?"

"Why, burning Guy afore his time. They never used to light up afore dark afore this. It's a jolly big bonfire, however."

"A bonfire?" said Mr. Innovate, "impossible! I forbade it, sirrah!"

"Well, sir, all as I can say is," replied Roger, "that they have been getting in tar-barrels, oil-caskeses, and sugar-hogsheads, and such other rumbusticles, all the morning."

"Impossible, sirrah!—I tell you it's impossible—I forbade it."

"If you'd only condescend to climb up to the belfry, you'll see if I have not prophesied right," said Roger, leading the way.

"I will, sirrah! but stop, before we proceed, allow me to inform you that to use the word 'prophecy' of any event that has actually taken place is incorrect in the extreme."

After this very seasonable exposition of his accuracy in the use of words, the master took off his surplice, and climbed up into the belfry, where he saw sufficient to convince him that Roger's prophecy was fulfilled.

In the centre of the green was an enormous pile of flame, which was just getting to its height, and over the centre of it—oh, horror!—was a *fac-simile* of himself, dressed in his academics, suspended by the neck from a gallows. Around it were dancing four or five hundred little urchins, who looked, through the smoke, like a lot of Indians performing their orgies round a war-fire, or a nation of cannibals anticipating a delectable slice of roasted enemy.

All sorts of shouts, shrieks, and cries, were heard at intervals; but when the flame caught the Guy, and his gown, which had been saturated with turpentine, and burst out into a blaze, one loud hurrah! "held out," as the music people say, to a great length, shewed the delight and satisfaction of the spectators.

"Can I get out upon the roof, Roger?" said Mr. Innovate. "I must put an immediate stop to this. I will harangue them on their impropriety first, and flog them all afterwards."

Roger led the way through a trap to the tower roof, and, as soon as Mr. Innovate had succeeded in following his leader, he commenced shouting to the different præpositi by name, and desiring them to put out the bonfire and come to him immediately.

Whether the wind set the wrong way, or the crackling of the flames drowned his voice, he was not certain; but he was certain of this, that no attention whatever was paid to it. That he was seen

he was convinced, for the whole crowd shirked off to the further side of the fire, and dispersed themselves about in all directions, leaving the guy to his fate.

"If you go down now, sir, you'll find the door unlocked, I *prophesy*," said Roger.

"Prophecy again! but why do you think so?"

"Becos, while you was a holloring, I seed one of the boys cut cross to the cloisters, and turn down towards the chapel-door—he now'd you was safe enough up here—and took the opportunity to inlock the door."

In this, his second prophecy, Roger was quite right, and Mr. Innovate proceeded in haste to the green, which he found deserted, and arrived at the fire just in time to see the gallows, which had supported his representative, fall into the midst of the flames.

## CHAPTER XII.

MR. INNOVATE, we are sorry to say, was in a very great passion, and when he found no one in the green, upon whom he could vent his ire, his passion was considerably increased. He dodged round the bonfire, expecting to find some little unfortunate delinquent raking out the potatoes, which on such occasions were invariably subjected to the "fiery ordeal," to prevent a waste of fuel, and solace the palates of the juniors. All his dodges, however, did not avail him—every boy had, in the classical language of Rotherwick, "cut his lucky," which, in theatrical parlance, means, "made his exit."

Mr. Innovate waxed warm; whether from the volcano of wrath raging within him, or from the heat of the bonfire, it is impossible to say; but Roger averred, that the "prisperation run down off his izonomy as it does off the ruf of a new-tiled lean-to."

"Roger," said the master, "we must extinguish this alarming mass of igneous matter."

"If," replied Roger, "you mean to put out this here bunfire, it strikes me very forcibly as it ain't quite a going to be done just quite so aisy as you seems to conceive; look at that 'ere guy—the 'exact image of yourself—he'd burn a good un for a hour or tu, he's sarrized 'ith tar."

"Saturated, sirrah! saturated, you mean. How is it—how can it be, that this poor unsophisticated creature, born within the precincts of this classical atmosphere, should be plunged into such a profundity of ignorance of the commonest decencies of expression?" soliloquized Mr. Innovate, as he commenced a vigorous attack on the combustibles with his feet. As long as he confined his kickings

and stampings to the outside fagots, the experiment was successful; but, as soon as he reached the glowing embers, his shins, which were only protected by silk stockings—for the fashion in those days compelled the head-master to resort to “shorts and silks,” now nearly obsolete—began to feel, firstly, very uncomfortable; secondly, very painful; thirdly, and lastly, positively unbearable.

It seems paradoxical, that we, human beings, in the excess of either delight or pain, should express those different feelings by dancing; but so it is. Give a child a cake or a shilling, and the moment he's out of your sight he begins dancing to show his joy. Give the same urchin a smart box on the ear, and he will dance, perhaps more actively, to indicate the pain he feels.

This philosophical view of stimulants to Terpsichorean motions—I, Peter Priggins, feel it my duty to give to the public, in order that they, the public, may not feel shocked when I tell them, that the head-master of Rotherwick was seen by all his boys, in the unacademical act of dancing most *operatically* and energetically at their fireside.

The *pas-seul*, however well performed, did not seem to alleviate the pain, as the sufferer was observed by his highly-delighted pupils to apply his hands rapidly, with an up-and-down motion, to the scorched limbs, and calling on Roger (so they guessed by his motions) to assist in the manipulation of the injured parts. Roger, however, was so tickled at seeing a fellow-creature suffering excessive pain, that, as he confessed afterwards, “he couldn't in no ways be of no sort of sarvice, as his laughabilities got so much the better on him, as he was forced to pretend to sniz werry wiolently, and stuff his 'ankercher into his mouf, to prevent the dominie from diskivering of him.”

We are told that silks of all sorts have deteriorated in quality since the days of our grandsires, which may be true or false, as most assertions are. Mr. Innovate doubtless gave a full price for his silks, and doubtless had the best quality of “men's silk hose;” but the smell of fire had not passed over them with impunity; the web was injured, and the rubbing process brought away a considerable portion of it, leaving exposed a pair of stalwart shanks, resembling a fresh-cut beefsteak in their ruberity.

The master pointed out the “*hiatus valde deflendus*” to Roger, who, having stuffed the whole of his bandana into his facial orifice, and not having a second edition to resort to, could not restrain his laughter, but burst into a choky sort of chuckle, any thing but sympathetic.

“ὦ ἰγὼ δύστηνος, said Mr. Innovate, surveying his silks, “μοὶ πᾶσι τῶ, πᾶσι βῶ; ὄχομαι δὲ ὄχομαι; παππαππαὶ παππαππαὶ.”

“Oh! oh! oh! ah! ah! ah! he! he! he!” replied Roger, holding his hands hard upon his frontal protuberance, evidently alarmed,

lest his uncontrollable laughter should rupture his peritoneum, and standing on one leg at a time, like a fatigued fowl.

Mr. Innovate would probably have run through several choruses of Euripides, Sophocles, and Æschylus, in giving classical vent to his feelings, had he not espied Roger indulging his mirth at his expense. Unfortunately for the clerk he did so; and though the sight of his mirth acted as a counter-irritant on his legs, it caused a great deal of irritation in Mr. Innovate's mind, which he displayed by searching for a weapon to punish the offender. *Furor arma ministrat*—the light of Mr. Innovate's eye lighted on a lighted stove of one of the oil "caskeses." He seized and brandished the brand, and like a fury, armed with a torch, rushed on the mirth-exhausted Amen, and knocked him down with the first blow; the second fell on his head, or rather his wig, which being unprotected by his hat, and saturated with animal oil—the result of several years of seritude—imitated the mansion of Mr. Ucalegon, in Troy, and burst out into very vivid flames.

"Dash my wig!" exclaimed Roger, executing rapid rotatory motions with both his hands to extinguish the frizzling hair, "what-ever shall I git to put un out?"

"*Υδωρ μὴ ἀπώστω,*" replied Mr. Innovate, leaving the semi-usted wig and its wearer to their fate, and striding away as fast as his injured shins would allow him to go; an act of unkindness, of which he would not have been guilty, had not the shouts of the boys, who were gazing through the cloister-windows, and screaming in ecstacy at the tragicomic termination of their attempt to assert their "privileges," and maintain the "customs" of the school, attracted his attention, and caused him to forget his humanity.

The approach of the master was, of course, a signal to disperse, and like frightened rabbits, when a dog approaches the warren, the boys showed their scuts, and went to earth so rapidly, that when Mr. Innovate reached the cloisters, nothing was to be seen but the door leading to gown-boys, and that firmly fastened on the inside.

Finding all attempts to gain admission vain, and after expostulating, threatening, and entreating, in all the living and dead languages with which his reading furnished him, Mr. Innovate wisely resolved to go to his house, apply a healing salve to his smarting shins, put on a fresh pair of silks, and summon the undermasters to a council.

He summoned them, but not one of them answered the summons—they had all wisely taken advantage of a whole holiday, to breathe the fresh air of the neighbouring fields, or to enjoy themselves in some way or other. The writing-master, who lodged at the garden-er's house, and who was a clever, shrewd, long-headed Scotchman, happened to be at home, waiting anxiously for his pupil—the son of a Scotch nobleman, intrusted to his especial care—and wonder-

ing what could possibly have detained him from his stirabout and morning lecture.

Mr. Innovate wisely resolved to call upon him to assist him in his difficulties. The boys indeed asserted—but schoolboys will assert any thing—that he often resorted to this gentleman's assistance in composing the annual oration, and doing other little bits of latinity, that were to be subjected to the ordeal of public criticism. Be that as it may, he certainly called upon him to aid him on this occasion, and Mr. Splitquill responded to the call, after he had doffed the tartan dressing-gown and trousers, in which he sat at home to save his best suit, put on a clean white tie, and washed the marks of the "auld Gillespie," in which he indulged copiously, from his visage.

Mr. Innovate related at large the whole proceedings of the morning very candidly, not omitting his attempt to extinguish the illegal bonfire, and making a living guy of poor Roger; at which Mr. Splitquill would have laughed outright, had he not resorted to a huge pinch of "auld Gillespie," and pretended to sneeze in a way that an habitual snufftaker had no business to do. He executed the manœuvre very naturally and very loudly, and by smothering his face in a large cotton imitation of a silk pocket-handkerchief, succeeded in disguising his proneness to risibility.

After a long debate, in which strong arguments were adduced on both sides, and an attempt was made on the part of Mr. Splitquill to represent the affair as a "mere trifle," Mr. Innovate roared out, "*hæ nugæ seria ducent in mala*," and pronounced firmly, but not politely, the "privilege question" to be "all humbug," and asserted his determination to vindicate "the law," let the result be what it would.

Mr. Splitquill accompanied Mr. Innovate round to all the doors by which access was usually gained to the hall, where the boys were assembled. At none could they gain admittance; and Mr. Splitquill patriotically, considering the risk he ran, volunteered to address the rebels through the bars of one of the windows.

Now the writing-master, though a severe man, was liked by the boys for himself, because he was not a sneak, but more for his pupil's sake, who was deservedly beloved by the whole school—though they did laugh at his *short* corderoys, and *shorter* commons of stirabout. When, therefore, his snuffy face was seen peering through the bars, no missiles were hurled at it—which certainly would have been the case had any of the other masters ventured on "putting in (so rash) an appearance."

His arguments and expostulations, though kindly and laughingly received, had no effect on the boys, who begged him to announce their unchangeable determination to maintain their "privileges" at *all risks*. He, therefore, "left the bar" of the window, and told the

result of his negotiations to Mr. Innovate, who was walking up and down under the windows, in what is vulgarly called a *quandary*, logically a *dilemma*.

Manning was sent for, and ordered to manufacture a gross of rods—which order made him happier than he had ever been in his life. He had never had so large an order for his favourite goods before, and he resolved to surpass himself in the execution of it. The cook was ordered to “stop the supplies,” and the butler was forbidden to provide the usual edibles and drinkables which came under his department—the garrison was to be starved out.

When the under-masters returned to their dinner and pint of wine in Stream Hall, a sort of Rotherwickian common-room, they were informed of what had occurred, and (after making a very excellent meal, and absorbing the allowance of port), proceeded in a body to the headmaster’s to hold a seniority, as we call it at college, on the proceedings to be taken.

It would be tedious to give an account of all that took place—suffice it to say, that hunger compelled the rebels to throw open the gates in less than twenty-four hours, though they did so, declaring that not one of them would submit to be flogged or punished in any way for maintaining their “privileges.” This might have led to serious difficulties, had it not fortunately happened that one of the boys was taken seriously ill from his confinement, and the disorder pronounced by the physician of Rotherwick to be “catching.” This fortunate circumstance solved the Gordian knot of the difficulties; the boys were sent home, and the “privilege question” was allowed to fall to the ground.

My hero, the Hon. A. N. Nincompoop, was unfortunately the individual who so fortunately relieved the honourable house of Rotherwick from its dilemma; though, fortunately for him, the physician of his honourable friend Lord Wastepaper, to whose care he was consigned, discovered that what was pronounced by the Rotherwickian medical to be a “catching” disorder, was nothing more than a slight disturbance of the functions of the liver, arising from his having eaten an unfair portion of cold plum-pudding, which was set to rights by the pleasant application of what was called at Rotherwick, a draught of “black soup.”

He arrived at home in excellent health and spirits. Lady Skinnykin pronounced him “perfect;” his mother thought him greatly improved, and his father wondered “how the deuce a mere child had imbibed such very odd ideas of men and things.” Mrs. Slushem kept a stricter eye on the feminine domestics, and Mr. Nutmeg missed sundry bottles of Lord Fuddlehead’s best claret and burgundy, which he had set aside for his own private use. The neighbours all allowed him to be a fine young man, but pronounced him a “*little too fast*.” Into his home career it is not my province to

intrude. I shall, as I professed, confine myself to his school and college proceedings.

On his return to Rotherwick, Ninny felt rather nervous lest the "privilege question" should again come on the *tapis*, and lead to unpleasant results; but he was quickly relieved from his uneasiness on that score, as not the slightest allusion was made to it. Mr. Innovate's time and attention were entirely taken up in preparing his boys for the "grand public examination," at which it was to be made to appear to the advocates for the "railroad system of learning," that Dr. Tintinabulum's plans were the "perfection of practicability."

Night and day did Mr. Innovate drill the boys. The slates and slatepencils, the books and maps were almost worn out by being "handled," and the boys quite worn out with handling them. The marching by two and two, and the simultaneous uprisings and down-sittings were very neatly executed. Mr. Innovate was satisfied and happy.

The great, the important day at length arrived, and with it arrived a great many carriages and a great many people; some in private, some in glass coaches, and a very considerable majority in jarvies. All, however, were welcomed by the head-master with smiles of anticipatory triumph over the "old humdrum system" of teaching, and ushered to their seats by the *præpositi*, who were, as well as the other boys, "dressed all in their best," and behaved remarkably civil, taking care to make their remarks and observations just loud enough to be heard by the quizzees, and not by the masters.

When the examiners, Dr. Tintinabulum and Mr. Lackteacher entered the school-room, which they did very affectionately, arm-in-arm, the partizans of each vied with each other in making as much noise as they possibly could, in which the boys of course joined, because they liked a row, and it relieved their nervousness.

When the tumult dwindled to a calm,

Mr. Innovate rustled his gown-sleeves, removed his trencher from his head, and waved it gracefully downwards, as a signal for all to sit down.

The manœuvre went off so well, that Miss Sniggs, a Tintinabularian, observed in an audible whisper to Miss Biggs, "How elegant, how simple, and oh! how exact!"

But Miss Biggs being a Lackteacherian, turned up her snub-nose more snubbishly, and replied still more audibly, "And very—very mechanical!"

Sniggs looked daggers at Biggs, and Biggs returned it with interest.

"*Præpositus* of the first," cried Mr. Innovate, "see your boys *in order*."

"Prepare to rise," replied the præpo.

"Rise!" exclaimed the master, which they all did at once, except some half-dozen, among whom was Ninny, who were fastened down to their seats by a plentiful application of cobbler's wax,

"Down again," screamed the præpo, in alarm. "Now up altogether."

The adhesiveness of the wax prevented this second attempt at simultaneous consurgity being executed as successfully as it might have been, but it was decidedly better than the first.

"Prepare to go up!" said the præpo. "Go up!"

Up marched the boys, and took their places in pretty good order, considering that sundry pinches and kicks were lavished in their march upon those before them by the hinder boys.

"Handle your books!"—"Open your books!"—"Prepare to construe!"—"Construe!" said præpo.

"How can they construe," inquired Mr. Lackteacher, who was viewing these proceedings with an insidious smile, and winking at Miss Biggs and others of his favourers, "when you have not given them a passage?"

"Oh! all that," observed Mr. Innovate, "is—"

"Ay, I see," said Mr. Lackteacher, "all ready—cut and dried."

"The passages are already selected," remarked Dr. Tintinabulum, looking to his party for support, who followed Miss Sniggs's example in uttering a gentle "Hear! hear!"

"Let me hear silence!" cried the master to the boys, who were tittering and whispering.

"I don't exactly see how that's possible," said Mr. Lackteacher.

"Silence being the absence of all noise, how can yon you *hear* it?"

"Very good! very good!" replied the master, grinning vindictively at his pupils, who were delighted at seeing him snubbed.

"No. 6, prepare to begin!"—"Begin," said præpo.

Now No. 6 happened to be Ninny's place, and against him præpo. had a spite for having cowaged his bed the preceding night. Ninny was therefore taken aback, as the sailors say, and was not "prepared to begin." A frown from Mr. Innovate, floggingly put on, hastened his preparations, and he commenced the Epode of Horace which had been previously selected,

"*Ibis Liburnis inter alta navium.*"

"Decline *ibis*," said Mr. Lackteacher.

"Nominative *hic et hæc ibis*, genitive *ibis*," replied Ninny, confidently.

A sneer from Lackteacher, and a universal grin from the boys, confirmed Mr. Innovate in his opinion that such an iniquity deserved immediate notice. He hurled the Horace which he held in his



hand with so true an aim at Ninny's head, that he imitated the Grecian hero of old, and measured his length on the ground.

"Good 'evans, how brutal!" exclaimed Miss Sniggs.

"Served him perfectly right, mum," replied Miss Biggs, "though I do rigidly object to corporal punishment."

"Pick up the book, and go down three removes," shouted Mr. Innovate—a command which Ninny readily obeyed, amidst the laughter and congratulations of his friends.

No. 9 being next called on, got on swimmingly until he came to the line,

"An hunc laborem mente laturt," etc.,

when he shortened the penultimate of the last word, and told Mr. Lackteacher it was the "dative case of *latus, laturis*—a side."

"Go to the bottom of the school, despicable dunce!" said Mr. Innovate, and forwarded his journey thither by an application of his hands to his shoulders that sent him with his face on the floor, which certainly was the "bottom of the school."

The Latin being rather a failure, Dr. T. suggested that possibly the Greek might go off better; a hint that Mr. Innovate took by giving the order—"Prepare your Hecubas!"—"Open your Hecubas!"—"Construe!" This certainly succeeded better, until No. 5, coming to the lines in the chorus, where the *olim* Queen of Troy, wishing to let her daughter, Polyxena, know the agreeable news she had in store for her, says,

"ἔξελθ' ὁκῶν."  
ἔξελθ', ὁκῶν.

"Come out—come out," said No. 5, hesitating,

"—of the cart," prompted Oxtowne.

"Come out of the cart," said No. 5, which, being a bit of slang of the day, set the boys off again, and sent No. 5 down four removes.

Mr. Lackteacher laughed indecently loud to show his amusement at this blunder, and was seconded by Miss Biggs, who sneered evidently and offensively at her friend Sniggs, who, pretending to stand up to reach a book that was near her, stamped revengefully on Biggs's toe, on which she knew grew a large and tender bunion. This occasioned a little interlude, which enabled No. 5 to gain his remove downwards without attracting much attention.

When quiet was again restored, and the pain of Biggs's bunion had subsided, the examination was renewed, and as the boys were only put on in passages that they knew by heart, all might have ended well, had not Mr. Lackteacher shown a degree of vindictiveness which ought not to have existed in the breast of so patriotic a "promoter of the education of the lower classes."

He blew his nose very loudly to attract attention, and Miss Biggs

helped him by a powerful ahem! a sound between a hiccup and a cough. When all eyes were turned upon him, he politely requested one of the smallest and stupidest-looking boys in the class to go through a Greek verb.

"What verb should you like?" inquired the *examinee*.

"Oh! take any verb you like," suggested Mr. Innovate, very kindly, "take *τίω*."

"*Τίω*?" said Mr. Lackteacher. "Why *τίω*?"

"Because," replied the boy, very innocently, "that's the verb as cuts out *τύπτω* in master's new flib, and we say it every day."

"Flib? What's a flib?" inquired Dr. Tintinabulum.

"A name we give to the new grammars, because they've nothing outside them," replied the boy.

"And not much *inside*, I should think," said Mr. Lackteacher.

A wrangle ensued, in the midst of which the boys were dismissed, with prizes and rewards of *merit* (?), and the company bowed out—with the exception of a committee of males, who had been invited to dine with the head-master. The dinner, being cooked by the *artiste* of the Rotherwick *cuisine*, was not despicable, and the flavour of the viands served to satiate the appetites and rage of the conflicting parties. Nothing unpleasant, therefore, occurred while the meal lasted, and Dr. Tintinabulum even condescended to say "a little wine?" to his rival Mr. Lackteacher, who filled his glass and nodded amicably but *rather* stiffly in reply.

When the cloth was removed and the old port placed on the table, the friendly feelings of Mr. Lackteacher vanished with the butler, and in their place the demon of discord raised a malevolent commotion in his breast which displayed itself thus :

After the usual "toasts" had been given, and "responded to enthusiastically," as they say at the Crown and Anchor, Dr. Tintinabulum rose from his chair, and requested permission of the chairman to give a toast. As Mr. Innovate instinctively anticipated an eulogium on himself, coupled with "the health of the head-master of Rotherwick," he graciously acceded to the request of his friend, accompanied by a look which was intended to imply an excess of curiosity, and an intensity of doubt, as to whose convalescence and longevity the doctor could possibly be going, with the aid of a bumper, to propose and promote. Mr. Lackteacher saw the look, and, winking at one of the sub-masters who sat next to him, whispered, "Humbug!"

"Bumpers, if you please, gentlemen," said the doctor, setting the example by filling his glass,

"Until it did run over,"

either from his zeal in his friend's behalf, or from a feeling of ner-

vousness, arising from a sense of the awful responsibility he had taken upon himself.

"Don't attempt to raise it to your lips, doctor," said Mr. Lackteacher, consolingly, "your nerves are unstrung, and the wine is too good to be wasted;" and then, turning to his neighbour, added loud enough to be heard by the assembled party, "he must do as *other brutes* do—stoop and imbibe."

The doctor, without noticing the "aside," commenced a "brilliant assortment" of compliments on the gentleman whose health he was about to propose; and when his allusions became so palpable that no one could any longer doubt who that enviable gentleman was, Mr. Innovate first looked greatly surprised, afterwards very much abashed, but finally, as the speaker's increasing energies supplied him with more strongly-perfumed flowers of rhetoric, exceedingly proud and gratified.

As I, Peter Priggins, am entirely "unaccustomed to public speaking" myself, and have not a copy of the doctor's speech by me, my readers must be satisfied with the *heads* thereof, which was all my friend Broome could remember of it—(Dusterly letting a pun, says that is the way to make a *capital* speech). Perhaps it's no great loss after all, and any gentleman (of Oxford, of course, I mean) who has any imagination, can easily supply the *hiati*, as a very classical mayor of our city once correctly designated the gaps in the gums of the town-clerk, where his teeth ought to have been; "but," as he added, "cariosity had made them all *non est inventuses*."

I beg the doctor's pardon, who, during this digression, has been left standing on one leg, with one hand—the left—firmly clasping the back of his chair, and the other flirting with the rind of an orange; his eye, not "in fine phrensy rolling," but resolutely fixed on a nail in the opposite wall. After ascertaining that the nail would do to hang his ideas upon *sic orsus est*—

"—deeply profound regret—toast of such magnitude and importance—abler hands (hear)—a man whose native genius—acquired attainments—honour to his country and of Rotherwick—classical honours—unsurpassed—in-brightness luminary of Oxford—focus of the eyes of all the friends of education—freeing himself from those prejudices which emasculate the minds of bigots—heroically and without-an-eye-to-his-own-aggrandizementally, crushing under foot the "old humdrum system,"—expansion of intellect—quick-march of mind—slow coaches—steam travelling—cut-across-the-fields system—*my* plan—result of painful thought (hear, hear)—smothered the Angular system—*sub*-merged other public schools in a profundity whence they never can hope to emerge—public approbation—thanks of the nation—no reward *but his own* conscience—ministerial patronage—a comfortable

stall—the dignities of the bench—regret of his grateful country—tomb in Westminster Abbey (hear, hear!)—for the proof of all which—unhesitatingly appeal to the result of the examination of to-day—sit down—head-master of Rotherwick—due honours.”

The doctor then took his eye off the nail in the wall and sat down, after gulping his bumper convulsively, amidst suppressed cheers from all but Mr. Lackteacher, who I regret to say, had behaved himself in a very ungentlemanly manner—considering he had been eating the toastee’s mutton—throughout the whole oration. He had carried on a running commentary of “humbug,” “twaddle,” “lay it on thick,” “that’s a bouncer,” “modest, that,” suiting the action to the word; and when the doctor alluded to the mortal remanets of the head-master being snugly entombed in the abbey, he slapped his hand upon the table and positively asserted it “was *no go*.”

Mr. Innovate had not heard these flying remarks, nor one-half of the doctor’s speech; as he had wisely abstracted his mind from all other matters, in order to get ready to “put in his answer,” as they say, “in chancery.” When, therefore, he saw the speaker resume his seat, he rose, as a matter of course, to return thanks, but was prevented by Mr. Lackteacher, who commenced a speech which lasted an hour and a half, in which he abused not only the Tintinabularian system, but every body who supported that system, and the inventor of it, and his *protégé* more especially. In every pause of his discourse he filled a bumper and drank it off—Dr. Tintinabulum, to be even with him, did the same, and the application of the port acted as oil on the inflamed minds of both—they were, to use a mild term, strongly “excited,” and when Mr. Lackteacher had finished his “few remarks” and his decanter, and, with a look of triumph, dropped into his chair, the doctor filled his remaining glass—scowled at his enemy—drank it—rose from his seat, and, being unable to articulate from rage or “excitement,” shook his fist, pointed to his heart, went through a series of signs imitative of loading a pistol, ramming down the ball, cocking the weapon and presenting it at his adversary’s head, and committed himself in the eyes of the respectables there assembled.

But I must do as Timanthes did of yore, draw a curtain over what I cannot satisfactorily represent. I will merely say, that the head-master did *not* make a speech, and that the doctor and Mr. Lackteacher *did*—the former to his spouse, in which he accounted for sundry sanguineous stains upon the frill of his shirt, by reminding her of his liability to a “bleeding at the nose”—the latter to his valet, in which he explained away a black eye, by vituperating “the inconvenient practice of butchers’ boys carrying trays along the *pavé*, parallel to the optics of unwary passengers,” which is *certainly an objectionable trait* in their character.

Unfortunately, the boys by some means were made acquainted with the disreputable affair, and the slang phrases, "there you go with your eye out," and "why do you carry your nose in a sling?" were the result of the information so injudiciously conveyed to them.

But, to return to our hero. During the Easter vacation, which followed immediately on the examination, he had been especially introduced and requested to patronize a boy in the form below him. The name of this youth was Master Wastepaper Winkey. His surname, of course, he inherited from his father, "old Winkey," as he was familiarly termed; his *prænomen*, or Christian name, was given to him by his godfather, Lord Viscount Wastepaper, the powerful patron of Ninny.

I must first explain how so important a personage—in his own estimation—as Lord Wastepaper was, condescended to become the sponsor of, and allow his noble name to be bestowed upon, so humble an individual as Master Winkey.

Winkey *père* began life as a printer's devil—a species of demon too well known in these penny publication' days to need description—and by dint of great natural talent, aided by unremitted application, raised himself in life, until he became first of all a contributor to, then sub-editor, and lastly, editor and principal proprietor of, *The Scarifier*, a powerful and largely-circulated newspaper, which advocated the principles of Lord Wastepaper—whatever those principles were.

I was going to say, "we of the *New Monthly* never talk politics," but that would sound too grand for an humble college scout; I merely mean that I need not say whether Whigs or Tories (I like old names) were scarified by *The Scarifier*. It is sufficient for my purpose to know, that Winkey was of Lord Wastepaper's way of *thinking* (?) and in return for certain hebdomadal dinners, gave his patron some ten or twelve lines of column in his hebdomadal publication, and, out of gratitude and in an exuberance of delight, for his allowing him to insert "his reasons for entering his protest against" a certain measure in *The Scarifier*, volunteered to do the baptismal responsibilities for little Winkey, who was still *in petto*; which means, not introduced to the public. His gratitude was still further evinced by procuring him an appointment in the foundation at Rotherwick, where, as he was looked upon as a *snob*, he was unnoticed by the Hon. Augustus, and every body else of any pretensions to red-book.

"Augustus," said Lord Wastepaper to Ninny, about ten minutes before dinner on Easter Monday, "you know my godson Winkey, of course? he dines here to-day."

"I know him *by sight*," replied Ninny, "but we're not cronies; he's not in my set; we don't allow counter-skippers or snobs."

*This was accompanied by so magnificent a look, and an applica-*

tion of both his forefingers and thumbs to the elevation of a well-starched shirt-collar—then a recent and much-prized invention—that Lord Wastepaper was staggered.

“You will greatly oblige me,” he resumed, after recovering from the staggers, “by not only patronizing, but making an intimate—a—a—”

“What, a *pal*, as we call it?”

“Exactly—precisely my meaning,” continued his lordship, “by making a *pal* of him for the future. I am under great obligations to his paternity. But for him many of my best things—my—my—my——”

“Slap-up sayings,” suggested Ninny.

“Exactly—precisely my meaning—would have been—been——”

“Turfed—eh?”

“Exactly—precisely my meaning—had it not been for the columns of the *Scarifier*—indeed, I’ve been noticed in the—the—the——”

“Fore-horse of the team—the *leader*.”

“Exactly—precisely my meaning—and the whole family of the Fuddleheads would have no cause to regret doing the—the——”

“Amiable,” again prompted Ninny; his lordship’s *copia verborum* being any thing but a cornucopia, or horn of *plenty*.

“Exactly—precisely my meaning,” replied Lord Wastepaper. “You recollect what Flaccus says :—

“*Vixēre fortes ante—ante—*”

some man or other?”

“Agamemnon was the man you allude to,” said Ninny; “but, excuse me, we are rather particular about quantities at Rotherwick, and call it *vixēre*.”

“Exactly—precisely my meaning, replied Lord Wastepaper, coughing rather confusedly, “and, by-the-by, as you’re home for a week you’ll want a—a—a——”

“Tip,” said Augustus, seeing his patron pull out a neat Russian-leather note-case.

“Exactly—precisely my meaning—there’s a Henry Hase for 10*l*. If not enough, do——”

“A bit of further application !”

“Exactly—precisely my meaning—but you *must* patronize the—the——”

“Snob, eh? I will,” said Ninny, pocketing the bribe.

Before and after dinner Ninny behaved barely civilly to Winkey or Compo, as he was called at school, from the fact of his father having been a compositor, and the 10*l*. would have been thrown away, had not the boys got together cozily at the side-table, while the seniors were having their rubber, and displayed a congeniality

of taste in absorbing several glasses of brandy-and-water, which, in the fashion of "the days gone by," was placed there with a dish of sandwiches. Compo told Ninny several anecdotes connected with the press so well, that Ninny was amused, and, after the third glass, laid his arm over his shoulder, and called him "old fellow," a term of endearment that put Compo so much at his ease, that he revealed a great many of his father's secrets—in confidence, of course.

"But I say, old fellow," inquired Ninny, "how is it that your governor stands putting all the old one's twaddle into his paper, eh?"

"Oh! his lordship's one of our best customers," replied Compo. "My governor gives him five or six lines, and he takes fifty copies to circulate among his friends."

"Ah! I see; but it must be stupid work editing a paper, eh? No end of questions to answer every week, and fellows coming in to lick you for libels, eh?" said Ninny.

"The greatest fun in the world," said Compo. "I answer the questions when I'm at home, and it's easy enough. For example: if a fellow writes to know 'which lived longest, Julius Cæsar or Nebuchadnezzar?' I don't trouble to ascertain the fact, but merely say, 'A. B. is an ass—the question has been answered at least twenty times already in this journal; and as to coming to *lick* us, we keep a strong porter, and are never at home. Then we've such fun in the editors' room up-stairs. Two such jolly fellows. A shilling's-worth of brandy-and-water over every article! The governor never shows till Saturday, when we go to press."

These confidential communications, and the "*repetatur haustus*," established an intimacy between the boys, which Lord Wastepaper pronounced to be "exactly—precisely his meaning," and, on their return to school, Ninny undertook to, and succeeded in developing the good qualities of his new friend so successfully, as to get him into the "best set," where his knowledge of London life—of a peculiar grade—soon obtained him the ascendancy. This caused a quarrel between him and Ninny, which ended in a fight, and, to the surprise of the whole school, who looked upon Ninny as "*Hercules ille*," Compo, from his superior science, acquired in sundry set-to's with the sub-editor for exercise, came off victorious, and without a scratch. This as it invariably does, at school, cemented their friendship more firmly.

Mr. Innovate was not satisfied in his own mind with the result of the grand examination, and resolved to adopt strong measures, to ensure a more satisfactory exhibition at the next public display of his railway system of education. The failure, for such his monitor—his own, not the school monitor—conscience, plainly told him *it was*, his modesty would not allow him to attribute to any thing

"rotten in the state" of his new plan; he cogitated deeply to discover the mysterious cause, and at last was fully convinced that it was all owing to the little boys being sometimes ten minutes behind time in coming into school in the morning.

Having discovered the cause of the disease—the *prognosis*, or the *diagnosis*, as the learned *in arte medendi* call it—his next judicious step was to discover and apply a remedy for it. Flogging was not allowed, except for heinous offences, by Dr. Tintinabulum and the Tintinabularians, who doubtless had strong reasons for objecting to so common, and, generally speaking, successful a mode of punishment. Impositions were still done by the fags, and therefore were no punishment to the imposed. Mr. Innovate was in despair. What was to be done? He resolved to ask all the under-masters to breakfast, to talk the matter over.

The under-masters differed in opinion mentally from their *chef*; but they did not express the difference in words, and the matter might probably have caused a great deal of difficulty, had not one of them, who was naturally designed for a sneak—he was named "Sneaking Jerry" by the boys—suggested the propriety of *fining* the lag-behinds.

"An admirable notion," said Mr. Innovate, "but I can improve upon it—we will not only fine *them*, but every boy in the whole school, a shilling a minute for every minute that one little lag-behind does lag behind."

This was voted too severe, and was lowered to a sum proportioned to the varying incomes *allowed* to each form weekly. To make this clearer, I must observe, that the first class—the old *sixth* form—received, without consent being obtained from their parents, or their even being consulted on the subject of their sons' private receipts and disbursements, an allowance of three shillings and six-pence weekly; the *second* had half-a-crown; the *third* eighteen-pence; and so on, until it descended to the "small charge" of six-pence, below which it was considered *infra dig.* to go. What Rotherwickian knew the value of *copper* coin?

When, then, one boy was one minute behind his time, the individuals of the first class were fined a shilling each, and all the other classes in a sum proportionate to their respective allowances. At the end of the week, therefore, instead of having to receive the wherewithal to obtain cakes and tucks, they had to pay something out of their own pockets; or, if they had not wherewith to pay, to be put down in the book as "Drs. to the dilatory fund." This was exceedingly unpleasant, but was borne for some time without any other manifestation of disgust but grumbling.

"Compo," said Ninny to his friend one night, as they sat over their themes and the fire—for autumn was again befriending the coal-merchants, "can you lend me a pound note to-morrow?"



"Haven't a scuddick—not even a brown—quite cleaned out by these infernal fines," replied Winkey, putting his fingers into his shorts, and exposing two empty pocket-linings.

"It's a great shame," said Ninny, "that we should have to pay, and heavily too, for the laziness of the fags, and not be allowed to lick them either."

"Yes, it is," said Compo; "and I should like to know where our money goes to."

This dialogue roused the other boys, who left their exercises, and, surrounding the speakers, expressed a sudden but decided intention of knowing how their large contributions were expended, or not contributing any longer, let the consequences be what they might.

"Who can do an addition sum when money is concerned, that is, what old Splitquill calls a compound one?" inquired Ninny.

Compo could, for he had acquired sufficient knowledge of summing before he got his appointment to Rotherwick. This was fortunate, as none of the others could—arithmetic not being considered necessary for "the sons of decayed merchants," as the statutes rudely designated the foundation boys.

"Take this vessel of paper then, Compo," said Ninny, "and let us know, as near as you can, how much *tin* Innovate has appropriated to himself from gown-boys only."

Upon inspecting the "dilatatory fund;" it was found, by reckoning up, that, independent of 4*l.* 17*s.* which remained on the "debtor's side," 30*l.* 10*s.* had been paid during the last quarter, and, upon this fact being announced, loud cries of "Shame, shame! we won't stand it any longer," followed, expressive of deep indignation.

On the next day at twelve o'clock, a meeting or concio of the boarders was called in the gownboys hall, at which, after a full exposition of their grievances made in several admirable speeches, it was agreed to demand of Mr. Innovate an account of what he had done, or intended to do, with their money, and, if he refused to accede to so reasonable a request, to refuse to pay any more fines, and have a grand rebellion.

There was but one serious difficulty in this arrangement, and that was, *who* should be the boy to put the question touching the *tin* to the head-master? Those who had been loudest in expressing their indignation at their grievances, and their determination not to submit to them any longer, were observed to hang back first when this inquiry was made; no one was found resolute enough to "bell the cat," until Winkey offered, if Ninny would be their leader, to second him. Loud cries of "Ninny for ever; he's a plucky one;" and other such flattering remarks, induced our hero to give his consent to this arrangement, the announcement of which was followed by loud huzzahs.

It was settled, that as soon as they were all in school in the afternoon, and Mr. Innovate had taken his seat, Ninny should give a signal by sneezing loudly, to ensure which he had provided himself with a pinch of pepper, and then the signal was to be repeated by Compo, and all the boys were to "rise simultaneously," and cry out, "no fines."

As the clock struck two, every boy was in his place, and Mr. Innovate flattered himself that the success of his plan for ensuring punctuality was no longer doubtful, for there was not one lag-behind to justify a fine. He looked round triumphantly, and, smiling complacently, took his seat. Ninny instantly applied the pepper, and uttered a series of tremendous sneezes. Compo did the same, and the boys rose *en masse*, shouting, "No fines, no fines," which they continued to do until Mr. Innovate rose from his chair, pallid with alarm, wonder, and excitement. The cries then gradually ceased, and were followed by a dead silence.

Sneaking Jerry was the only under-master present, and, being naturally timid, and seeing there was likely to be a row, he pretended that he had left his pocket-handkerchief behind him, and ran out of school to the different boarding-houses to apprize the other masters of what was going on.

Mr. Innovate looked round the school with an eye before which the majority quailed, and demanded, in a stentorian voice, "the meaning of the indecent cries that had just polluted the pure atmosphere of Rotherwick school?" This question was especially intended for the captain's benefit; but as Mr. Innovate's eye, when he was excited, had a slight cast in it, Ninny, whose place was nearly at the bottom of the first class, really thought it had been put to him, and answered it by saying, in a firm but respectful manner, "We wish to be informed, sir, what you have done with all the fine money?"

"Any thing else!" inquired Mr. Innovate, curling his lip into a polite sneer.

"Merely that if you do not satisfy us on that head, we do not mean to pay any more fines," said Ninny.

The boys, encouraged by Ninny's coolness, and, at a signal from Compo, renewed their cries of "No fines! no fines!" until Ninny shouted out "Silence! What's the use of making a row! Let us behave like gentlemen."

This appeal was successful, as the Rotherwickians valued themselves at a high rate on the score of their gentility, and Mr. Innovate, gaining courage from the reappearance of sneaking Jerry, with a tail of the four under-masters, addressed Ninny individually, thus:

"We thank you, sirrah, for quieting the school, and beg to

tell you (a low bow) that we do *not* mean to render an account of the moneys."

"Then," said Ninny, "I beg to tell you, sir, that I do *not* mean to pay any more fines."

"Nor I—nor I—nor I," cried five hundred little voices, in all the notes of the gamut.

"Silence," cried Ninny.

"Nincompoop," said Mr. Innovate, after blowing his nose violently, and looking lachrymose, "sorry are we to blight the fair prospects of any boy, but, unless you submit to pay the fines we think it expedient to impose, we *must* expel you from the school."

"I certainly shall not pay the fines," said Ninny.

"Nor I," called out Compo, as per agreement.

"Then you are both expelled," said Mr. Innovate, blowing his nose again, more fiercely than before.

"I shall appeal to the governors," replied Ninny, taking up his books, and leaving the school-room with his friend Compo.

This was a signal for a general attack on the windows, which were speedily demolished with slates and other missiles, and a rush out of the school-room into the green, where the bump of "destructiveness," so prominent in schoolboys, was further developed, in spite of the exertions of the under-masters to prevent it, by an assault on every window in the place, much to the benefit of the glazier who "contracted to keep all the glass in Rotherwick in repair." Benches, tables, book-cases, desks, and every thing breakable, were broken to pieces, but no violence was offered to any of the masters, because, as Ninny said, "Such conduct would be cowardly, ungentlemanly, and unbecoming so respectable a set as the Rotherwickians."

Mr. Innovate stood, like the gentleman at Carthage, "weeping o'er the ruins" of Rotherwick, and solacing himself by now and then expelling any boy whom he saw making extra exertions to complete the destruction of his much-loved domain. Sixteen were thus punished, and left Rotherwick with Ninny and Compo for London, where they had a champagne dinner at the Bedford, went to the play, had a hot supper with lots of punch, and went to bed with the assistance of all the waiters in the establishment.

On the following morning, shocking bad headaches, and the dread of their governor's displeasure, cast a gloom over the broiled kidneys and curaçoa at breakfast; and they separated with their courage considerably diminished, but firmly resolved not to submit to a surrender. Twelve, however, of the number were forced, by their judicious parents and guardians, to return, and were readmitted upon consenting to be severely flogged, *in medio scholæ*. Forty-five more underwent the same unpleasant operation

for being parties to sending a long account of the rebellion to a morning paper, and quiet was restored in Rotherwick.

Lord Wastepaper called a meeting of the governors, at which Mr. Innovate was strongly objurgated for inflicting fines upon the boys without their knowledge and consent, and ordered to readmit Mr. Nincompoop upon his submitting to be flogged. This he refused to do, declaring he would never sit in the same room with him again; and Ninny not choosing, as he said, "to expose his person to the admiring gaze of 500 puerilities at his time of life," and not wishing to deprive Rotherwick of the services of so zealous, if not discreet a master, declined the kind offer of the governors.

Compo's father also refused to allow his son to return, and "took the shine out of Rotherwick," as he expressed it, by inserting a long and exaggerated statement of the transaction in the *Scarifier*, in which he libelled all the masters, and for which he had to pay 50*l.* damages according to the verdict of a discriminating jury of his peers, and to submit to the pleasing and witty remarks of the counsel engaged by the plaintiffs, who took care to bring to light in the course of their examination a full account of his humble birth, parentage, and education.

The fines, by order of the governors, were reduced to one penny, and Ninny returned home to Wales, where he was cherished as a "martyr to scholastic despotism," by his admiring governor and governess, at the suggestion of Lady Skinnykin, who still honoured Lady Fuddlehead by residing with her.

### CHAPTER XIII.

THE Honourable Augustus Noodledoodle Nincompoop had fortunately put his name down on the books of Christ Church before the untoward event of his expulsion from Rotherwick happened.

The Dean—

"Priggins!" said Broome to me when I had read to him thus far from my manuscript, "for *my* sake be cautious how you speak of our dean, indeed of every don connected with 'our *house*' (*ex ede Christi*—it's astonishing how vehement some Christ Church men are in insisting on this distinction!) We are acknowledged to be the top sawyers of the University, and are consequently jealous of, and indignant at, any thing that may tend to take the froth off our beer."

"Haye! the ead you mean," said Dusterly, seizing the fresh quart that Mr. Rakestraw, the corpulent landlord of the Shirt-and-Shotbag, had just introduced; and performing the operation alluded to metaphorically and characteristically by Broome, begged "we

would hobserve the hastonishing halteration for the worser, has was made in the andsome happearence of the jug has olded the lickor."

Broome smiled benevolently on our mutual friend, and, adopting Lord Wastepaper's favourite expression, observed it was "precisely his meaning," and showed his high estimation of appearances, by finishing the jug, and ordering a fresh one with a "good head to it."

I ventured to ask him how it was possible I could deteriorate from the dignity of the dean and dons, to whom in relating his tale I should be compelled to allude, when they were all dead and gone?

"Haye! rotten and forgotten," said Dusterly.

"Dusterly!" said Broome, looking disgusted, "how can *you*—a bedmaker of the University—predicate oblivion of any of its members?"

Dusterly looked evidently bewildered and incapable of understanding Broome's interrogatory, but winked at me as he knocked the ashes from his pipe illustratively of his assertion.

"Dead or not, Peter," continued Broome, "you may rely upon it you will be accused of drawing the portrait of some of our dons, or some of their particular friends."

"In that case," replied I, "I must rest my defence upon the '*qui capit*' plea, and make up my mind to submit to the consequences—they won't 'call out' a scout."

"*We* are not fighting-men," said Broome, "but, as I am the acknowledged supplier of Mr. Nincompoop's college-career, the indignation you may excite will be vented upon me, and I shall lose many little seasonable presents—"

"Christmas-boxes, you means," said Dusterly.

"That I have hitherto been in the habit of receiving at all *seasons* of the year," continued Broome, terminating his sentence with a louder voice and a reproachful look at Dusterly.

I promised to be very careful in my allusions to the dead, and really could not quarrel with Broome for giving me the caution he did; as I have often experienced the truth of his remarks that, "I should be accused of drawing the portrait of some man, or of some one of his particular friends," though I always "draw it mild." Even our Bursar, who is by nature raised above those little prejudices that corrode the minds of inferior men, called me up to him the other day, and tried to bribe me with an order for half-a-dozen of port out of the proctor's bin, to tell him who Dr. Puffs, Dr. Doo-nuffin, and some other of my *dramatis personæ*, really were.

I was certainly surprised and a little offended at his attempt to interfere with an author's "privileges," and, I suppose, I expressed my feelings by my looks, for he added, "that it was not to gra-

tify his own curiosity that he made so unconseionable a request, but that of a lady, an intimate of his, with whom he sometimes played a pool of quadrille; and who, having known every don that had lived in the University for the last eighty years, was exceedingly annoyed that she could not point out the originals of some of my caricatures.

I declined most respectfully to enlighten the lady, and our bur-sar calling me "a wag," with one of his peculiar winks, gave me an order for *two* bottles of every-day port, instead of half-a-dozen of "the proctor." Thus is virtue rewarded.

This same identical lady a day or two afterwards sent Mrs. P. what she, Mrs. P., calls gallically a "*jolly petty she-hen*," and called upon her to "pump" her; but "Mother Priggins," as the undergraduates of St. Peter's allow, "ain't going to be pumped for every *puppy* that may happen to be presented to her."

I beg pardon of the public for this little digression. Mr. Nincompoop, as I was observing when friend Broome interrupted me, was fortunately entered at Christ Church, though he had not been matriculated; and the dean of that era was a very dear friend of Lord Wastepaper, and not on very amicable terms with Mr. Innovate, to whom he bore sundry grudges for having "cut him out," in doing sundry themes and exercises, which he was fully persuaded would have procured him (the dean) the distinguished honour of reading them "in hall," and gaining an infinity of *votes*.

When, therefore, Lord Wastepaper wrote him an account of his having *withdrawn* his *protégé* from Rotherwick, owing to the mercenary conduct of the head-master, the dean, without the slightest hesitation, expressed his "full approbation of his spirited and judicious mode of proceeding under the atrocious circumstances," and his resolution to admit Augustus as soon as any rooms were vacant for his reception—that is, rooms in "Canterbury," as no honourable could be supposed to put up with any habitation elsewhere. He also strongly recommended Lord Wastepaper to look out for a private tutor for his young friend, and have him "crammed" for entering. Nor did his kindness end there; for he ventured to give the address of a gentleman who had been a member of his "house," of whose birth and parentage little was known, except that his mother was a sempstress in Oxford, and that his nose was very much like—somebody's.

Lord Wastepaper acted on the hint, and wrote to Mr. Workemhard at his vicarage of Fire-cum-Fume, in the county of Stafford, which, after being rejected on account of its very low figure in the "liber Ecclesiasticus" by all the students, had descended to him as senior servitor.

Mr. Workemhard did not venture to refuse Lord Wastepaper's *cub*, and *400*l.* per annum*, as it was backed by the "dean's parti-

cular" recommendation; nor was his joy at such a pleasing addition to his moderate income lessened by the fact of old Winkey's begging him to take young Winkey, or Compo, as we have hitherto called him, on the same terms.

The young men went down together to Fire-cum-Fume, which derived its name, doubtless, from being pleasantly situated in the immediate neighbourhood of several coal-mines, which, not being contented with supplying all England with warmth, made the country too hot to hold them by keeping constant fires of their own all the year round. Their flames being "*superficial*," like the modern systems of education, served to "enlighten the country" for many miles.

I shall merely say of Mr. Workemhard, that, considering the up-hill work he had, he *coached* his team remarkably well, and gave them a deeper insight into the profundities of "As in presenti," and "Propria quæ maribus," than they had had a chance of gaining at Rotherwick.

Old Winkey presuming upon the intimacy of Lord Wastepaper with the dean, had not the least doubt about getting his son into Christ Church, and suggested an early application, for the purpose of getting his rooms ready at the same time with Ninny's.

It may be as well to give copies of the correspondence between the viscount and his friend, before I give the results of it.

I must observe that his lordship did not *quite like* the idea of his *protégé's* being hunted through life by the son of a newspaper editor; and, though his deep sense of the obligations under which he lay to the columns of *The Scarifier* induced him to accede to the proprietor's wishes that he would write to the dean, he did so in a way that would lead that functionary to oblige him by giving him a polite refusal, as may be seen from his letter.

"My dear Dean,

"Amongst several of the scholars who were withdrawn from Rotherwick school at the same time as my honourable young friend Nincompoop, was a lad who bears the name of Winkey, with whom Augustus has done a bit of familiarity—rather, I think, unbecoming his rank—but boys of seventeen are not the best judges of the dignity of rank and station—instead of which, his father rather reckons upon getting him into Christ Church, on the score of some trifling attentions bestowed upon him by me.

"Old Winkey is no fool! He is editor of a paper, or, now I should rather say, proprietor, as he has 'cut his pen'—I don't mean wounded his quill—but declined the drudgery of writing, except by deputy; I believe I *may* have sent you a copy of his weekly publication *The Scarifier*, in which, I must allow, more

justice is done to speakers in parliament than in any other paper. *I* can say so, at least as far as *I* am concerned.

“ In last Sunday’s paper—I think I sent you a copy—you could not have failed to notice that some attention was drawn to my few remarks on ‘the wholesomeness and moral effects of treacle-posset, as contradistinguished from the fatal practice of imbibing brewers’ beer;’ but I merely mention it to show you the benefits of being on ‘good set terms’ with the proprietor of so respectable a paper; and I have no doubt if you could enter young Winkey at Christ Church, your ‘house’ would be benefited by it. Oxford is attacked in many prints, instead of which, old Winkey would patronize you; and yet, I don’t see why, between ourselves, young Winkey should be allowed to be put upon the same terms—that is, footing—with an honourable. You can act as you like in the matter—I know you are generally full, and a refusal will not disoblige

“ Your sincere friend,

“ WASTEPAPER.

“ P. S. By-the-by, don’t answer *unfavourably* before *Friday*, as my remarks on ‘the superiority of hog-skins for saddles’ will be in print, and too late to be cut out on Saturday. The dailies did not deign to notice them.”

The dean, fully comprehending his friend’s wishes, though not very logically or fairly expressed, wrote on Friday evening a letter which his lordship said “was not precisely his meaning,” but which had the desired effect; *le voici*

“ My dear Lord,

“ The *Scarifier*, or rather *two scarifiers*, we receive every week. The one directed to myself, I do not scruple to say I read and enjoy very much, and am happy to see that justice is done to your lordship’s remarks—*speeches* I ought to say—but your modest way of alluding to your observations in the house, induced me unthinkingly to use your own scarcely correct expression. The other copy, which you kindly send to the common-room, is also read in secret with great avidity by all the members, though in public they speak disparagingly of it, on account of its excessive *piquancy*, acknowledging at the same time that it is the best written and wittiest paper of the day. I regret that my list of applicants for admission to our house is so numerous as to preclude my acceding to your lordship’s special request that I would put down the name of Mr. Winkey, jun., on my list. He could not come into residence under five years, we are so *very* full. Your lordship can read this passage of my letter to the highly-respectable



father of the young man, and assure him of my sincere sorrow at not being able to admit a gentleman who would, I feel assured, do honour to our house. Will that do, my lord, or shall I come it stronger? By-the-by, the bishop of——— is going fast, sinking rapidly; may I beg of your lordship to keep an eye on the announcement of his decease? His loss will be severely felt, and his successor will be a lucky man. I need say no more to a person of your lordship's penetration; and, by-the-by again, the rectory of Snipebog in the fens is vacant, and in the gift of the L—d Ch——r. The stipend is under 500*l.*, and, with Lord Fuddlehead's borough interest, you might procure it for his son's private tutor, poor Workemhard, who is a heavy charge on me, and with whose tender lungs the smoky atmosphere of Fire-cum-Fume disagrees exceedingly. If I can do any thing more to extinguish the Winkeys let me know.

“ I have honour to be,

“ Your Lordship's very obedient  
humble servant,

“ PERTINAX PLOTTER.

“ Deanery, Christ Church.

“ P. S. By-the-by, once more, and with due submission to your lordship, but the B—of L—— is also shaky. ‘ Two strings to your bow’—but your lordship will keep an eye on that *see* also.”

His lordship invited Winkey, *père*, to dine, and after a very *recherché* serve-up of *plats pour deux*, and the third glass of *château margot*, read to him the passage from the dean's letter, which put an extinguisher upon the candle of his son's hopes of being a member of Christ Church.

Winkey, senior, was too sharp not to see through the tactics of his lordship, but too wise to let his lordship see that he did so. He expressed his regret at his son's having no chance of becoming a member of Christ Church, and asked his lordship's advice how he had better act under the circumstances.

Now nothing could gratify Lord Wastepaper more than having his advice asked, because it was so little appreciated as not to be very often in demand. He therefore fell back in his chair, and, putting on a very grave, considering face, as he sipped his claret, blushingly confessed that “ It was one of the few subjects on which he was not *au fait*. He had been at Christ Church himself, and really did not know the name of any other college; but he should strongly advise consulting the university calendar; or, better still, his friend Winkey's going down to Oxford and judging for himself, after making due inquiries of one of the guides.”

"Guides?" inquired Winkey, thinking of "Guides to Knowledge," "the college tutors I presume your lordship means?"

"By no means," replied Lord Wastepaper, "I mean a kind—that is, a sort—of men—in shabby-genteel coats and gaiters, who wait about the Angel and Star inns, and really for four or five shillings give you an immensity of information on Oxford matters. You can't do better, rely upon it than—than—"

"Hire one of these walking encyclopædias of university knowledge," said Winkey.

"Exactly—precisely my meaning," replied his lordship. "Money well expended, rely on it. Go down by the light Oxford, take up your abode at the Star. The landlady, Mrs. Fascinate, is an old ally of mine. I'll give you a letter to her, and she'll do for you, depend upon it. Might I trouble you to touch the bell? We'll try one bottle of Lafitte."

"I beg pardon," said Winkey, rising to ring, "but would not a note to the Dean of Christ Church, or some academical, be more satisfactory?"

"By no means. You will find they will all say they are *full*, and will not venture to recommend another college."

Winkey finished the Lafitte, took his coffee, his *chasse*, his patron's advice, and letter of introduction, and his place in the light Oxford. The following evening he was welcomed by Mrs. Fascinate, the smiling landlady of the Star, and, upon presenting his note, was ushered by two waiters into No. 1 Drawing-room, *front*, and shewn by three very pretty chambermaids into his sleeping apartment, No. 2, *front*.

In these degenerate days, when coaches—I mean stage-coaches—are allowed to rattle up to the Star, and guards with swollen chops are permitted to announce their arrival and departure by playing out of tune on a keyed bugle, the rooms No. 1 and No. 2, *front*, would not have been a treat; but in former days Mrs. Fascinate would no more have sanctioned a hired vehicle, excepting a yellow and four, within a hundred yards of her door, than she would have hired a waiter with red hands, or a barmaid who could not boast of blood patrician in her veins. Nos. 1 and 2 were, therefore, exceedingly comfortable; and Mr. Winkey enjoyed his dinner and wine very much, in No. 1., and was ushered by the three pretty chambermaids, bearing two wax-lights and one warmingpan, into No. 2, where he fell asleep, amidst the sounds of undergraduate revelry and the thrumming of

"The harp that once"

was played nocturnally within the now-forsaken walls of the Star Hotel.

On the following morning as he sat at breakfast, the head-waiter,

at the request of the "gen'leman in No. 1," procured and introduced a specimen of that now nearly extinguished genius, an Oxford guide. The specimen was dressed, as all of his species were wont to be of yore, in a tuteur's left-off coat and waistcoat, purchased of one of us scouts, and in drab knees and drab gaiters (*si hiems esset vel foret*—but without the continuations if the weather was warm) an unstarched and cable-like white tie, and a hat, which, in these times of four-and-sixpenny ventilators, would be pronounced a shocking bad one.

"The guide, sir," said the waiter, bowing.

"Come in," said Winkey. "Will you take a—"

"Little beer, if you please, sir. Never drinks no coffee, tea, or spirituous liquors."

"A seat I was going to say," said Winkey.

"Never takes nuffin of the sort, sir, much obliged to you all the same. If you'd ha' stood as long as I have, and walked about all day, showing of people the lions of the 'varsity, as our young gentlemen calls the curiosities, your *calves* would not be 'staggering bobs.'"

Mr. Winkey did not exactly understand this *standing* joke of the guide, but rung the bell for a glass of ale for his new acquaintance; an order that the head-waiter, knowing his customer, executed by bringing in a large quartcup of Squire Broadbrim's best, which, in those days, was exceedingly bad.

"I have sent for you to point out to me," said Mr. Winkey, "the best—"

"Way of seeing every thing in a day," said the guide (who was called "Old Explicator" by the men) setting down his emptied cup with a loud ah! ah! "always begins at the schools—central like—*meado tissimis tibus*, as we say in these classical regions—Bodleian—lots of books—Elgin marbles—five orders of archy-lecter, one above t'other—Saxon at bottom, or Doric, no matter which—High-on-ick—composite and tip-top—upper-sawyer-like—Corinthian—pieter-gallery—cat looking every way at once—Lord Pembroke's statty—Charles First's warrant—and no end of hinteresting hobjects—only a shilling! into schools, responsions only on now—young uns in a funk—across to the Radcliffe—pay a shilling—set your name down in the book—out upon the roof—fine view of Oxford—to the north Wadham College—Clarendon—theatre—not a play-house—Ashmole's museum—Trinity and Baliol, with a distant peep at St. John's and St. Giles's church. South: Brazenose—St. Mary's, All Saints—Tom Tower—Merton and Broadwalk, with Bagley-wood in the distance. East: All-souls, notorious for its two lanterned towers, and the non-residence of its fellows—Queens—Maudlin—University, and Joe Pullen on the hill. West: Carfax church—Castle Tower—William the Conqueror—hang criminals

—above in the distance—romantic woods of Wytham—Lord Abingdon—Lord-leef-tenant of the county—city prison and Worcester College—only you can't tell which is which."

The rapidity with which this compendium of information was uttered, fortunately for Mr. Winkey, exhausted old Explicator's lungs of all their air, and, ere he could inspire a fresh supply, he found time to assure him that he had mistaken his object in sending for him, and that he had not come down to the university merely to see the sights.

"Oh! ah! I twig," said the guide, winking at old Winkey. "Commercial?—want to be put up to a thing or two? Well, I'll do it—know every man as won't pay if he could, and every other man as can't pay if he would; but you must stand tick—no go without—four years at least; but no matter, you stick it on—lay it on thick accordingly—what's your line—eh? Cigars? travel for Hudson, Fribbug, and Trare, Pontay, or come the double with Minerigoes? No? In the toggery way, perhaps—Stultz—Story—or some first-rater, I suppose—good trade—native artists no go! Wrong again? Well, let me see—wine and lickures—eh? Champagne, claret, no-yoh, and mariskeeny? Carbonel—Justerini—eh? But you won't do much—undergrads too bad judges to appreciate your articles—satisfied with gooseberry-pop and sour Bordo—dons too good judges to give you your price."

"My good friend, you're entirely mistaken," said Winkey, looking indignant at being taken for a tradesman, "altogether wrong."

"Well! well! *manum est rare*, as we say in the schools—very seldom I am though. Twig now, I think—musical boxes and French prints—eh? thought there was a furrin cut about your nob—very profitable, but dangerous perfession. Recollect a German gentleman in your line—clever man—put in prison though—all through a silly Freshman, as showed the pictures to his private coach—a gentleman in the tea-and-tract way—belonging to society for refreshing of vice—vice-chancellor had him up—tried before my lord judge at the assizes—jury and counsel examined the pictures a very long time, and pronounced them undecent—twelve months on the treadmill—no joke—eh? Capital condition when he came out. I can put you up to the dodge, but you must stand a good commission—30 per cent. on the musicals, and 50 on—"

"Fellow," exclaimed Mr. Winkey, "your impudence can only be attributed to your ignorance—I'm not in trade! I came down here to consult you, by the advice of my very intimate friend Lord Wastepaper, about—"

"Wastepaper?" continued Explicator, not looking a bit more deferential at his employer's suggestion of his intimacy with the noble lord. "Wastepaper? knew him well—lufft at Christ Church—steered the Torpid, and d—d badly too—thick with Mrs. Fasci-

nate—eh?—got his seals when he was bosky one night—prompted a friend to represent him, and run away with an heiress—ward in chancery—got the girl, and *quodded* for five years in the Fleet. Lordship quite well, I hope?”

“Really all this is very unpardonable,” said Winkey, walking up and down No. 1, front, and pulling up his *gills*, as shirt-collars were then called,—“absolutely unbearable!—the brute talks of a lord as if he was nobody.”

The short time occupied by this soliloquy was employed by old Explicator in wiping his perspiring forehead with a cotton rinocatharizor, which he extracted from the crown of his “shocking bad hat.” When the operation was over, without paying the slightest attention to Mr. Winkey’s remarks, or making the least difference in his manner and deportment, he continued, by saying interrogatively,

“You knew Lord Limpet, of course? every body knew *him*—capital chap—had many a lark in his rooms—dab at sparring—floored him, though, many a time—what can stand against beer? Excellent cricketer—best batter on Bullingdon—but a regular ass for all that—got plucked for his smalls—conjugated *do—do, das, davi*—went by the name of Davy ever afterwards. You didn’t know the Honourable Mr. Muffiatoppe, I dare say? Regular reading-man—never out of college, and yet the most absent man in it. Lord! how you would have laughed at him—such queer things as he did—always made a pint of blowing his nose in his doyley—drinking the water out of his finger-glass, and rinsing his hands in the port wine! Got expelled for giving an unfortunate girl a lift in his buggy—great shame—did it all out of good nature, and mistaking her for a rail lady; and then there was Lord—”

“Silence, sirrah!” cried Winkey, in a very loud voice, and a very great rage, “I did not send for you to tell me a parcel of tittle-tattle about the aristocracy, but to furnish me with information on certain points. Listen to me, sirrah! but before we begin you had better—”

“Take one more jug of beer—wet t’other eye, we call it—never walk straight without. I’ll ring the bell—don’t trouble—William Waiter! jug of beer for gen’elman in No. 1, front—don’t know Mrs. Rakestraw of the Shirt and Shothag, I dare say? Capital landlady—never answers an order without a short arm and a long one.”

“A what?” inquired Winkey, looking bewildered.

“A short arm and a long one,” replied Explicator; “keeps the jug in the short arm, until she’s got the money in the long one. Don’t tick, I mean, and a capital plan it is in this university. Your good health, sir, and a pleasant walk to us.”

While the guide was “absorbing the malt,” Mr. Winkey hastily

explained to him, that he had sent for him to ascertain at which of the colleges or halls he could get his son admitted, so as to come into residence as early as possible.

"Halls, sir? never *enter* at a hall—keep them for *lishit murgary*, or *bene dussessit*; but how does he enter? *arm. fil.*, *gen. fil.*, *cler. fil.*, or what? *gent. com.*, *soc. com.*, commoner, or how? And how much stumpy do you mean to stand? Can't advise without knowing about these things."

Mr. Winkey explained that his intention was to enter his son as a commoner, but that he had not yet made up his mind as to what allowance it was necessary to make him, as he had not been at college himself, and was, consequently, ignorant of the sum required.

"Not been at college? I knew it at once," said the guide; wonderful the difference it makes—can't help being a spoon, unless you are regularly educated."

"And what sum should you consider enough?" asked Mr. Winkey, really for information, and disregarding the compliment that had been paid him. "I mean for a man to live like a gentleman at a respectable college."

"Why, as to living like a gentleman—that's all nothing—people's notions differs so much about the way of doing it; and, as to a *respectable* college, that's all nothing, too, as far as expense goes—there's very little difference in the charges, though there is a good deal in the comforts—commons or jints, it comes to much the same. Very wrong notions is got abroad respecting of college expenses—a hundred a year would kiver 'em all, and leave an over-plus for wine and loggery."

"A hundred pound per annum!" exclaimed Mr. Winkey, amazed; "how do you account then for the complaints that are made of the enormous expenses incurred by young men at the University?"

"You must ask Mr. Spavins, the hackman," replied the guide, "Mr. Pastyface, the confectioner, Mr. Loftyprice, of the Reindeer, and a few other sich. The system's bad, and the University gets all the blame, when they can't help it. They'd gladly alter it if they could, and so would all the respectable tradesmen, but they can't. Then, you see, there's a set of chaps as sets up on the 'cutting system'—pretends to undersell the respectables—gets the young gents names on their books—ticks for three years on acceptances, promising never to negotiate them—then hands them over to a London lawyer—bills renewed—interest and discount charged—afraid to tell the governor—renewed again and again—threats of arrest—money borrowed at an enormous rate of interest—floored at last—governor obliged to stump up, and cripple himself and family perhaps for ever. I merely give my own opinion; but I recommend every man to go to a first-rate Oxford tradesman for every

thing, and have his bills in every term, even if he can't pay them; he'll be treated civilly, charged fairly, and never be harassed and annoyed. Then I think the dons are wrong—but it's only my own opinion—in not allowing the men to have dinners and suppers in their own rooms from the college-kitchen—it drives them to the Reindeer and other inns, or the confectioner's, who cannot supply them half so cheaply. Then I'd never allow any man to hunt, unless his paternity gave his written consent. As to the bills being sent in to the tutors—the plan, I'm told, has been tried at Cambridge, and turned out a miserable failure. All I mean is, don't blame the 'varsity, that's all—your very good health, sir."

"Well, I shall recommend my son to follow your advice," said Mr. Winkey. "I mean to give him a good allowance; but, if he runs in debt, I'll never pay his bills."

"He'll be sure to run in debt, and you'll be sure to pay his bills—at last," said old Explicator.

"I won't—I'm determined," said Winkey.

"So hundreds have said before you, but they all does it at last, just as natterrally as if they'd never said they wouldn't, leastwise, if their pockets isn't as empty as my cup is."

The guide probably meant this as a hint to his employer for another replenish; it was not taken, however; and Mr. Winkey, after confirming with an oath his intention of not paying his son's bills, took up an Oxford calendar, which was lying on the table for the convenience of visitors—lions and lionesses as the nondums call them—and proceeded to interrogate old Explicator on the subject which had caused him to visit Oxford.

"Now, sir, what college do you recommend?"

"Christ Church, in course," said the guide, in a tone that implied there could be no doubt about the matter.

"I have already applied there," said Winkey, looking magnificent again, "through my very intimate friend Lord Wastepaper. The dean, unfortunately, could not accede to my friend his lordship's request, because the college is so full."

"That's only acos you ain't a regular swell—if you'd been a court-card, a trump, that is, a sort of nob like—they'd have found a *lokis inkwo* for your colt, and entered him for the matriculation-stakes the very next term as is."

Mr. Winkey did not exactly relish this explanation of his informant's notion of the reason why he had failed in getting his son into Christ Church; but proceeded to read over the list of the colleges as arranged in the calendar, to each of which the guide made some objection or other; but I will only give two or three examples as a specimen of the validity of the rest.

"St. Bartholomew?" inquired Mr. Winkey.

"Four lectures a day, and a sermon in chapel every Sunday—

expected to go to St. Mary's twice besides, and head down the sermons—he'll never stand that," replied Explicator.

"St. Luke's, then?"

"Staircases all too steep—get drunk and break his neck."

"St. Thomas's? what say you to that?"

"Don't brew their own beer, and got a cook as abbreviates the commons, and lengthens the battels miraculously."

"St. Jude's? snug little college, eh?"

"Wusser nor ever—too snobbish—besides dining at half-past four, and pricking their gums with iron prongs. One gen'leman as entered through a mistake, brought in half a dozen silver forks, and was rusticated for breaking through the "customs of the college."

"St. Matthew's stands rather high, does it not?"

"Respectable—very respectable—but dangerous. The principal has got a garden, and the men make a point of 'doing it up' for him every term! they take up all the plants and trees, and set 'em in again with their roots uppards. As the freshmen are always set to do the transplanting, and the principal is devoted to vegetables, some of 'em are safe to get a *lishet mugrary* to some hall as hasn't got no outlet."

Mr. Winkey began to despair: he doubted whether the long list before him would supply him with an unobjectionable college for his son, until he came to St. Peter's, which old Explicator pronounced to be the *nippulisultry* of colleges.

"Brew their own beer—got a capital cook for an Oxford cook—knock in every night—outside the town, and handy for tandems—dogs and guns, and fishing-rods—river just handy—battels moderate—society good—gentlemanly set of tutors, who keep the men up to their work without bullying them. and scouts as close as fresh eyesters. Bursar an excellent friend of mine—very fond of fish, 'specially lampreys and Severn salmon—as I'm Worcestershire—supply him with great pleasure, and—make a devilish good thing of him."

As it was immaterial to Mr. Winkey whether the lampreys and Severn salmon were sold to the Bursar as dear bargains or not, he did not stop to ask the price obtained for them; but finding that he, the Bursar of St. Peter's, was a gentlemanly man, and his guide sufficiently acquainted with him to procure him an introduction, and give him an opportunity of explaining his views with regard to his son, he resolved to walk down to our college, and call upon my friend.

The moment old Explicator got upon the *pavé*, he resumed the air and twang peculiar to his profession, and entertained his employer, who would fain have been "on other thoughts intent," with the usual and hackneyed phrases of a lionizer, until they arrived at St. Peter's.



They found the Bursar in his rooms, and Mr. Winkey was regularly introduced by his guide, who retired outside the oak, not to leave them to a private conference, but to run off to the buttery, to try if our tap was at all deteriorated. Having tried a pint out of each of the two best and strongest barrels, he confessed to the butler that it was as good as ever, and returned to his post—the door-post—just in time to meet his employer, who had made arrangements with the Bursar for the immediate matriculation of his son, and his coming up into residence after Easter.

“Good morning, Mr. Winkey,” said the Bursar, bowing his visitor out; “oblige me by taking one turn round our gardens, while I speak a few words on important business with Mr. Explicator. I’ll not detain him long.”

“By all means,” said Winkey, and walked seventeen times round a fifteen-feet square grassplot, dignified by the title of the college gardens, before his guide rejoined him.

“Explicator, come in,” said the Bursar, “and shut the door. Gentlemanly man, Mr. Winkey, eh?”

“Not so very rummy a one, considering he’s never been at the ‘varsity,” said the guide.

“Certainly, certainly,” said the Bursar, in a hurried and careless tone; and then putting on a look of intense interest, he continued. “How are all your friends in Worcestershire? Quite well, I hope? Have you heard from them lately?”

“Not very,” replied Explicator.

“I—I—I am very much interested in their welfare, I assure you,” resumed the Bursar, pulling out a halfcrown; “take that, and buy two pounds of the best Oxford sausages, and send them down to them. They will be a treat, and you can just intimate that your wife is not very well, and that the physicians strongly recommend lampreys for her complaint. You understand, eh?”

“Wide awake,” said the guide, nodding and winking familiarly.

“Then there’s an order for a quart of the best beer. Now hurry after your employer, and let me see the parcel from Worcestershire the moment it arrives,” said the Bursar, shutting his oak, and feasting in imagination upon the expected dainties for at least half an hour.

Mr. Winkey followed his guide (who of course had his two quarts in the buttery, at the Bursar’s expense, not thinking it at all necessary to inform him that he had, as he called it, “chalked him up a quart” before he got his “order”) back to the Star; and after having liberally discharged him, and paid his hotel bill, which was not so very enormous, considering he had Nos. 1 and 2, front, made his bow to Mrs. Fascinate, and returned to London by a “middle-day Brummagem.”

Mr. Winkey, when apparently otherwise engaged, always had

an eye and ear open to the interest of the *Scarifier*. On the Sunday, therefore, after his return from Oxford, the reading public were gratified by seeing, in his "notice to correspondents,"

"A. B., Oxford, is informed, that it was not L—d D—y, but that eminent statesman, L—d W—r, who got bosky at the St—r, and forwarded the views of a relative of the *Fascinating* landlady of that excellent hotel upon a certain heiress, for running away with whom he got a commission aboard his majesty's *fleet*."

This he knew would gratify his patron's vanity; but it may be doubted whether the publication of Lord Limpet's failure in the schools, and the cause of it, and Lord Muffintoppe's rustication, for merely mistaking an "unfortunate" for a proper lady, was as agreeable to their lordships or their friends. He had serious thoughts of hiring old Explicator as a regular reporter of university matters; but, upon due consideration, resolved to defer it until his son had taken his degree, lest the publishing of the little anecdotes he might obtain should give offence to the authorities, and interfere with the youth's advancement, by ensuring a pluck for his smalls.

Winkey, junior, or Compo, as we shall still continue to call him, on the receipt of his visit to Oxford, ensured the box-seat of "the Black Prince," which then ran from Birmingham, through Oxford to London, in order to get to St. Peter's by the time fixed upon by the Bursar for his matriculation. Ninny did not accompany his friend, though he very much wished to do so. Lord Wastepaper, however, strictly forbade it, as *infra dig.*, and his *protégé* was obliged to submit. His curiosity was so great with regard to the manners and customs of the university, that he begged Compo to write him an account of his proceedings as soon as he thought he could give him a little insight into life in Oxford. This elicited the following letter, in a shaky scrawl:—

"Mitre Inn, Oxford.

"My dear Ninny,

"I am afraid you will hardly be able to decipher my hieroglyphics—my hand shakes awfully, and my head feels as if it contained all the blood in my body. It goes thump—thump—thump, as if my brains meditated a dissolution of partnership. All this is easily explained. I supped at St. Mark's last night with our old crony at Rotherwick, Tom Velox. You must recollect him; he was the fellow that used to distinguish one of his uncles, who had lost an optic, as the 'one that had a lamp out, and wore a verandah.' We had lots of broiled bones, grilled chickens and mushrooms; cold, stewed, and scalloped oysters, and I don't know what besides for eatables; and as for drinkables, there was what was called champagne

and sherry at supper, with some capital strong beer—court ale they call it. After supper we had egg-flip, punch, cardinal, and bishop, about a gallon to each of us, I should think, judging from the size of the jugs. No end of singing—at least making a noise with their voices—for they don't seem particular here about words or tune. I believe, for I have but a very obscure recollection of what passed, that I was ass enough to make several speeches, and sing four or five of our old songs, for which I obtained an excess of *κudos*. How the party ended, or how I got back to my inn, I cannot conceive; but as my back and the inside of my knees are much bruised, and very sore, I have a strong suspicion that I must have been doubled up, and wheeled home in a barrow.

“When I woke this morning I had serious thoughts of offering my services to any gentleman who might have a pond to be drained, or a well to be emptied; I am sure I could have done it for him speedily and thoroughly. I never knew what real thirst was before. I rung my bell, intending to order a dozen of soda water, to be opened at once into a bucket; but Dennis, the waiter, who has great experience in such matters, would not hear of it. He ordered me to ‘lay’ down, and in five minutes entered with a quart of St. Mark’s strong beer, into which he had put a toast and some grated ginger. The very sight of it was enough, and for some time I could not muster resolution to obey his injunction, ‘to toss it off to the last drop, and eat the toast.’ I did at last, however, and fell asleep for a couple of hours, and woke again, feeling much better, but very shaky and full about my nob. I’ve just been to look at the landlord’s greyhounds, of which he has an excellent breed. He wears the queerest tile you ever saw—about two inches high in the crown, with six inches of brim at least. The men call it his ‘Mitre.’ He is a kind-hearted, worthy man, sticks up for the university, and is very much respected by its members, to whom he is ready to give a helping hand at all times, even in discussing three or four bottles of port, and washing them down with five or six glasses of brandy and water. Recommend ‘the Mitre’ to all your friends. The charges are moderate, wines excellent, and the house is free from bugs and humbugs.

“But I must begin at the beginning, as the French say. When I left you at Fire-cum-Fume, I thought I had plenty of time to get to Birmingham; but the parson’s buggy-horse has a pace of his own, and out of it he would not go in spite of Jacob’s pig-whip, which he applied more vigorously than is his wont—urged by the promise of an extra halfcrown. I tried a pin, but it was not a bit more serviceable. I was determined not to be beaten by the brute, so I cut a large piece of furze, when we got to Foxfull gorse, and clapped it under his tail. The experiment proved that his hide was not so *insensible* in all parts as I imagined, for he immediately displayed

is tenderness by kicking Jacob out of the trap; and if I had not in to his head, and lifted up one of his fore-legs, and held it until Jacob had extracted the *causa tanti mali*, the chances are that Mr. Vorkemhard's equipage would never have cost him any more for axes. We certainly went at a livelier pace afterwards; but Jacob would sit with his legs outside, dangling over the wheel, being in ear of another kicking bout—for the horse raised his rump very suspiciously every time the lash tickled it.

"We got to the Hen and Chickens just as 'The Black Prince' was ready to start. Mr. Lillywhite, the waggoner, had the reins in his hand going to mount the box, when I made my appearance. As he is a 'privileged person,' and always speaks his mind, he addressed me thus—after telling the porter to put my luggage into the hind boot.

" 'Going up to Oxford, I s'pose?'

" I noded affirmatively.

" 'To be mutilated?'

" 'Matriculated, you mean.'

" 'Certainly—by all means, if you prefer it. Now let me give you a hint—if you don't keep better time at chapel and lecture, when you reside in college, you'll get double-thonged to make up for lost ground, I can tell you. Now jump up—here, Billy, put up the ladder for the gen'elman, he's only a Freshman.'

"As soon as we were clear of the pitching, and I thought he could hear my remarks, I begun a conversation by criticising his team. This he bore in perfect silence, until I said,

" 'Pretty little animal that left-hand front-horse.'

"To which he replied with a stare, 'That what?'

" 'That left-hand front-horse—the gray there, with an abbreviated tail.'

" 'Whew! ew! ew! ew!' whistled Mr. Lillywhite, and looking very grave, said, 'I tell you how it is, young man—I never druv a more ignorant chap in my life. You'd better get off at the fust stage up, take a yeller, and go back to your crammer—for I'm blowed if they'll have you at Oxford. Now mind what I say—that gray oss is called the near leader, and what you calls a 'brivated tail' is a short dock. Never call it by no other name again.'

" 'Why do you call it a *near* leader when it's the farthest horse from you?' I ventured to ask, after a quarter of an hour of feeling ashamed of my ignorance.

" 'Why, you knows nuffin! You see those two osses are called the near osses, becoss they runs next the near side of the road, and these two osses is called the off osses, becoss they run on the side as the driver gets off of.'

"I did not venture any more remarks until we got to the place

where we were to change horses, when I asked him if he would take a glass of ale.

“ ‘Much obliged to you, sir—never drink malt liquor, it’s the most sleep-bringing-oningest thing as is—I always haves six-penn’orth of cold without at every stage, and if any gen’elman likes to make a shilling’s-worth of it all the way up, I never objects.’ ”

“ I paid for his brandy and water, and had a glass of very excellent Staffordshire ale myself, and we got on much better afterwards, though I limited my inquiries to the localities; such as, ‘Whose house is that?’ and ‘What village is this?’ But after two or three stoppages, with corresponding colds without, and glasses of ale, which gradually got worse as we drew nearer Oxfordshire, I began to question him upon Oxford matters, and amongst other things, asked him what necessaries he should advise me to bring up with me when I came into residence.

“ We were then dragging Long Compton Hill, and I did not get any answer until we got to the bottom, and he pulled up for the skid to be taken off, when he told me ‘never to interfere with a man when he was driving down a steep hill, full inside and out, with a heavy load on the top, becos the politest of ’em could not stand it ’specially when the roads was slippery, and no hold for the skid.’ ”

“ When we were on the level ground, I begged to ‘move the previous question,’ touching the necessaries.

“ ‘Why you see I’m always ready to put a young man in the right way, and I’ll just give you the result of my ’quaintance with Oxford life. You *must* have two pair of muffles.’ ”

“ ‘Muffles! what are they?’ ”

“ ‘Boxing-gloves, to be sure—but you know well enough; I saw you squaring at the oss-keeper last stage, and as you came from Rotherwick you know all about that, so don’t go for to gammon me. Well then, two pair of files with masks and gloves to match. If you’re a real cricketer and mean to join the Bullingdon, of course you’ll bring your own bat. You shoot, of course? becos if you do and haven’t a double, my friend Sykes is your man—ticks for ever, and never duns. Then for fishing, I suppose you’ve got all right—if not, Loder and Gunner will put you in place—*they* tick too—never recommend a gen’elman to a man as doesn’t. Any thing in the dog line, Tom Sharps or Webb can ’supply—only ’member, they don’t tick for dogs—becos they ain’t recoverable in the vice-chancellor’s court. But if you want an out-and-out pinter or setter, just give *me* a nint, I always look out for master, and many a good one I’ve picked out for him. You see I rub my boots with a little ile of aniseed, and somehow the dogs follow me, and *then*, poor things, after they’ve run alongside the coach a few miles, *they* get leg-weary; so, out of compassion to the poor dumb

animals, I take 'em up and give 'em a lift in the fore-boot. Then if you are in the fancy line at all, I've got a few bulls and half-breds at walk, at Early-bottom, and elsewhere, and can give you the office when a fight is going to come off—but do you ever back a pigeon? I've got *sich* a breed of carriers; and as for fantails I won't turn my back on any man; all sixteen feathers in their tails, neither more nor less—but don't take my word for it—just get beyond Maudlin turnpike-gate, and tell Spooner, who works this coach to Maidenhead, that you are going to see my fantails at Early-bottom, and he'll frank you any day, only you must stand brandy and water at every public—he pulls up regularly, but loses no time, as he slacks his hand over the levels. Then you'll want a few rats, and a badger now and then—you can't do better than go to Webb; he's always a handsome assortment of lively ones. For pigeon-shooting, Boyce is the best man—fee him well and he'll pinch your birds without any body seeing him, and make your match safe. You hunt of course?'

"I was afraid to say I had never tried it, so nodded, and he continued,

"'Well, if I was you, I wouldn't bring my own osses up—there'll always be a screw loose. Go to my friend Isaac, or Kikum, they'll use you well and never dun you; but make a bargain beforehand, as that keeps all on the square, and saves jostling when you come to a settlement.'

"But I must leave off now and write again to-morrow, as I am just going to lunch with one of our men. I could not eat any breakfast, but feel rather peckish now, and fancy that I can make play at a couple of wild ducks and a dish of snipes. After lunch we are going to lark to Woodstock, to view the gloveresses. So adieu till next post.

"Your's truly,

"C. WINKEY."

## CHAPTER XIV.

"YOU'RE what hi calls ha rummy sort hof ha horthier. Mr. Priggins," observed Dusterly, in a tone between reproach and contempt. "You sets hout ha pretending to give hus a history hof the Honourable Mr. Nincompoop, of Christ Church; hand then goes hand hoccipies hall one chapter with hold Winkey and is young un's proceedings. Hi calls that 'ere ha gross himposition hon ha discernin public."

"At the commencement of my autobiography—"

"*Your what?*" inquired Dusterly.

"My autobiography," I replied.

"His that hany thing good to heat?" said my friend sneering and looking round to Broome to applaud his wit.

"At the commencement of my 'Life and times,' then, I continued, "I professed to be erratic on certain occasions; but in this instance it was absolutely necessary for the working up of my story; besides, in writing of a man's friend, you are writing of himself, as Cicero observes in his *De Amicitia*."

"D—Cicero, and d—is hamasishy too," said Dusterly, giving the table a hearty thump, to insure, as he expressed it, "hemphasis to is hobversation."

"Gently, gently," said Broome.

"Hi shan't, said Dusterly," "for you nor no one. Asn't 'e been and showed hup my huncle Enery?"

"Your uncle Henry! I assure you—"

"Yes, my huncle Enery," said Dusterly, thrusting his head into my face, and showing his teeth as a cat does in the act of yawning, "hunder the name hof hold Hindicator, the Hoxford Guide. There 'e his to the life—breeches, gaiters, and shocking-bad at; can't mistake im. Not that hi care a rap about *im*, honly a man don't like to ave is relatives showed hup without is leave, and a hoffer of standing somethin andsom."

I assured my friend that I had not the least idea of making his respectable uncle sit for the portrait I had drawn, and was proceeding to prove my words by pointing out to him some glaring discrepancies between the original and the picture, when Broome kindly whispered me that I should vainly attempt to convince him that his uncle Henry was not an injured man, and had better apply a salve to his wounded feelings in the shape of a glass of "warm with." I took Broome's hint, and told my angry friend I was extremely sorry that I had unintentionally hurt his feelings, and would treat him to any thing he pleased.

"Peter," he replied, shaking me by the hand, "hi eartily forgive you, hand hif you'd honly a inted has much hafore'and, you might ave showed up my haunt Hemily, hand hall the rest of my respectable family. Mr. Rakestraw! a glass of twist, and chork hit hup to Priggins."

Having thus healed my friend's wounded honour, and restored his equanimity, and "all for the small charge" of sevenpence, I will return to my tale, and give the remainder of Mr. Winkey's letter.

"Mitre Inn, Oxford.

"My dear Ninny,

"I am rather seedy again this morning, as we did a bit of excess at Woodstock yesterday, and I got split in riding home; but

Dennis has supplied me with his *panacea* for all ailments—a quart of St. Mark's court ale, with a toast and ginger in it, and I am just able to give you an account of my entering the university, and being matriculated before the vice-chancellor.

“Of course, my first effort when I arrived at ‘mine inn,’ and was ushered into the coffee-room by Dennis, was to order dinner, which quickly made its appearance; for, although I fancied I was extremely hungry when I sat down, and was afraid of being mistaken for the immortal Dando, I found that I could not do justice to the excellent fare provided for me. I felt nervous and fidgety, and there was a dryness about my palate and tongue that rendered the liquids more desirable than the solids. I tried to convince myself of the absurdity of yielding to these feelings, by reminding myself that I was no longer a schoolboy, but a man, and in a very few hours about to be an university man; but in vain; for opposite to me stood Dennis and the underwaiter, with their napkins under their arms, watching, as I fancied, every mouthful I took, to see how a freshman masticated. On one side of me sat three young men over a bottle of port, whom I should have guessed to be collegians from the style of their dress and conversation, without the collateral evidence of their caps and gowns, which were carelessly thrown on an adjoining table.

“Their talk was principally of boating, ‘going down’ with Stephen Davis, training on underdone beefsteaks and London porter, with discussions on the merits of the ‘strokes’ of the different boats. Though these remarks did not much amuse me—for they were talking in *hieroglyphics* to me, they did not annoy me. My presence would, probably, have passed unnoticed, had it not been for the following little dialogue between Dennis and myself, when I entered the coffee-room.

“‘Dinner, sir, I presume?’

“‘If you please, sir.’

“‘Soup and fish, of course?’

“‘If you please, sir.’

“‘Piece of biled beef, carrots and potatoes?’

“‘If you please, sir.’

“‘*Friggazeed* rabbits and Oxford sasages?’

“‘If you please, sir.’

“‘Plum-pudding and roobub-tart?’

“‘If you please, sir.’

“‘Pint of sherry and pint of porter?’

“‘If you please, sir.’

“‘Coming directly, sir,’ concluded Dennis, going out of the room, and, as I fancied, giving a look of peculiar meaning to the men who were sitting at my side. I may be doing Dennis an injustice by this



supposition, but something evidently drew their attention towards me, and elicited the following remarks, *sotto voce*.

“ ‘Regular case of viridity, eh?’ said the first.

“ ‘Regular. Just escaped from pedagoguity,’ said the second, who might have left school himself about six months.

“ ‘Scarcely fit to be trusted out without the governor,’ said the third, ‘but a neat figure and strong about the shoulders — make a pretty bow-oar, eh?’

“ ‘Could not pull ten strokes without being winded, though, if he eats such a dinner every day as he has just ordered,’ observed the first.

“ ‘Rather a queer-built coat,’ said the second.

“ ‘Decidedly queer,’ said the third, ‘and rascally bad boots.’

“ ‘Under these circumstances, Ninny, you can readily understand the feelings with which I sat down to dinner. I took wine with myself every two minutes, and a little London porter between each glass, to give me courage to proceed, and relieve the aridity of my palate, but it would not do; I felt as if I was smothered. I was fortunately relieved in a few minutes, or the consequences might have proved fatal.

“ ‘Who is going to chapel?’ said one of my tormentors.

“ ‘Why, we all cut this morning,’ said another.

“ ‘Dennis, listen if our chapel-bell is ringing.’

“ ‘It’s been ringing these ten minnits,’ said Dennis.

“ ‘Then let us mizzle,’ said all.

“ ‘Who is going to pay?’ inquired the youngest-looking.

“ ‘Oh, never mind paying; I’ve got a tick here. Put it down to me, Dennis; and I say, old fellow, I’ll owe you half-a-crown—I’ve got no tin.’

“ ‘Generally the case; but I’ll book it,’ said Dennis, opening the coffee-room door for the young men, who threw their gowns over their arms, and put their caps on their heads all on one side. I noticed, too, that all the boards were broken, and the tassels torn out by the roots.

“ After making a very miserable meal, Dennis intimated the necessity of a pint of prime port, to which, of course, I did not feel courage enough to object, though I had had quite sufficient stimulus from my pint of sherry and my London porter. When the port was introduced, I ventured to ask Dennis a few questions as to the proper and usual mode of proceeding in college matters.

“ ‘Waiter,’ said I, after giving utterance to a cough preliminary, ‘I am come up to be matriculated.’

“ ‘Swear to that,’ said Dennis.

“ ‘How do you mean, waiter?’

“ ‘My name ain’t waiter, sir; it’s Dennis.’

“ ‘Well then, Dennis, how do you mean that you can swear to it?’ I inquired.

“ ‘Practice, sir, all practice. Most men as enters comes up with their governor. Know ’em by that, and no mistake. When they come up by themselves, it’s just as easy. They always say sir, to the waiter, and let him order their dinner and wine.’

“ ‘Exactly,’ said I; ‘in my own case, for instance. I—’

“ ‘—Ordered dinner enough for six,’ said Dennis, smiling, ‘and wine enough for two—that is two *freshmen*, and felt choky-like all the time you were eating and drinking. Always the case at first; soon goes off, though. Now, when a man comes up to *reside*, how do you think I know him?’

“ ‘By ordering half the quantity, I suppose,’ said I, ‘and relishing his dinner.’

“ ‘Nothing of the kind, sir. When the coach or the poshay stops, he calls out Porter! take my luggage to my rooms. What name and college? says the porter. Then he gives a description of himself, in a loud voice, thinking to astonish the crowd as always collects round our gateway when a vehicle drives up; and to show ’em he’s got some money in his pocket, he gives the coachman or shayboy twice as much as is usual, and pays the porter a shilling beforehand for carrying his luggage. Where are you going to enter, sir?’

“ ‘At St. Peter’s,’ I replied: ‘must I go and call on the master or any body?’

“ ‘There again,’ said Dennis; ‘that shows your freshness. The head of St. Peter’s ain’t a *master*, he’s a *principal*—that’s one of the first things as you’ll have to learn; but as for calling on him or any body else, this evening, you’ll excuse me—but—eyes rather glazy—tongue a little faltering—pint of sherry, pint of porter, and now the port—rather too much *now*, but you’ll come to it soon.’

“ ‘You are quite right,’ said I, ‘Dennis, I do not feel exactly in a condition to call and do the dutiful to an authority; and as to the port, would it be asking you too much—just to—just to—drink it for me.’

“ ‘With the greatest pleasure, sir—any thing to oblige a gentleman,’ said Dennis, pouring the port into a soda-water glass, and, as he expressed it, depositing it within the lining of his waistcoat.’

“ ‘Not bad tackle that, sir; master never keeps two sorts, for fear he should be asked to jine a gentleman in a bottle of the worser.’

“ At Dennis’s suggestion I contrived a scrawl to the Bursar of St. Peter’s, and received in answer a polite note requesting me to breakfast with him and the Dean on the following morning, at half-past eight o’clock. I then showed my wisdom by taking my tea and *betaking* myself to my perch for the night.

"In the morning I presented myself at the college-gates at the time appointed, and, by the directions of Cerberus, knocked at the door of No. 2, one pair of stairs on the right. 'Come in,' brought me into the presence of the Bursar and Dean, who received me very kindly, and by their quiet gentlemanly manner relieved me of the embarrassment I felt at making my *début* on the stage of college life.

"It will not amuse you, Ninny, to give you an account of our conversation over the twanky and brown Georges, as it chiefly related to college and university matters, and the probabilities of Mr. Such-a-one getting his double first, and Mr. So-and-So being a dead pluck.

"After breakfast, the Bursar wished us good morning, and I proceeded with the Dean to his rooms, where I underwent a slight examination in Virgil and Homer, and the Greek testament, through which I managed to scramble *more modoque Rothervicensi*.

"This 'unpleasant little affair' being over to our mutual satisfaction, the Dean's scout was summoned to procure me a cap and gown, and show me the rooms that would be unoccupied after the Easter vacation, that I might select any set I chose; these things being done in college on the principle of 'first come first served.'

"As I find I am to be under the especial protection of this scout—my rooms (if two closets under a sloping roof deserve that name) being up one of his staircases—I must favour you with a description of his personalities and peculiarities.

"He delights in the name of Joseph Gumption, as appears by the parish register, but is known in college only by the title of Joey Gumps, with an alias of Old Joey; not because he is an old man, but because he has a little dirty boy, his son, who, under the same name, is in training to succeed his father in the mysteries of bed-making and pillaging—*omnibus hoc vitium lecti-factoribus*.

"Old Joey in his personals is short and rather obese, with an unmeaning set of features, cold grey eyes, and a nose of the Bar-dolph species, strongly indicative of his attachment to John Barley-corn, and resembling in its hues a turkey's head and wattle, as they appear on a cold frosty morning. In dress he adheres rigidly to the custom and costume of his predecessors, and appears in drab shorts and worsted stockings, a cast-off black coat of the Dean's and an unstarched white tie. What sort of hat he wears no one knows, as he has never been seen with such an article within the college walls, and he is never seen elsewhere, his leisure time being spent in the buttery and kitchen.

"I will just narrate to you a little dialogue that passed between us, to give you an insight into the man's character and manner. His principal peculiarities are an astonishing rapidity in uttering his words, and a firm conviction that he and his master, Mr. Neel-

downe, the Dean, know more than any body in Oxford, and *par consequence* in the world.

“ ‘These rooms,’ I observed, on being shown into my garrets, ‘are very small, are they not?’

“ ‘Call these small? Well, I like that. Mr. Neeldowne says they ain’t, and so *I* say; and so they ain’t small,’ replied Joey.

“ ‘They will want furnishing, at any rate.’

“ ‘Shouldn’t wonder—don’t *you* bother about that—leave it all to *me*—*I* knows all about it—me and Mr. Neeldowne settles them ere things.’

“ ‘I shall want crockery, eh? tea-chest and those sort of things, when I come up? Whom do you recommend, Joey, to supply such articles?’

“ ‘Shouldn’t wonder,’ replied Joey; ‘but don’t *you* bother about that—leave it all to *me*—*I* knows all about it—me and Mr. Neeldowne settles them ere things.’

“ ‘To all my remarks and questions he gave the same reply, with this little variation: when I begged him to name a tailor, of whom I might order a new cap and gown.

“ ‘*New* cap and gown? don’t be an ass—leave it all to *me*—sell you a second-hand set, good as new—*I* know all about it—there it is—five and twenty shillings—money down—thirty-five, tick till next term—me and Mr. Neeldowne settles them ere things.’

“ ‘As Joey was uttering this, he extracted from a sort of coal-closet a rusty-looking bit of bombazine with no sleeves, but two strings looking like a child’s leading-strings hanging from the shoulders, which he assured me was a commoner’s gown in a good state of preservation, and a cap which had certainly done duty for several sets of masters.

“ ‘Put ’em on—fit to a T—knew they would—leave it all to *me*—*I* knows all about it—me and Mr. Neeldowne settles them ere things—now for the Vice-chancellor’s.’

“ ‘So saying, and without waiting to listen to my expostulations about putting on another man’s, or rather set of men’s greasy, dirty cap he hurried me down the stairs at the risk of my neck up to the Dean’s rooms, ushering me in, and placing my hat on the table with,

“ ‘There’s a fit—quite as good as new—only five minutes to ten—Vice-chancellor won’t wait.’

“ ‘Very well, Joey,’ said the Dean, ‘we will go immediately—and Joey, I’ve some friends to dinner to-day at—’

“ ‘Very well—don’t *you* bother about that—leave it all to *me*—*I* knows all about it—me and Coqrins settles them ere things,’ replied Joey, as he fairly turned his master out of his own rooms and shut his oak forcibly.

“ ‘*Quite a character* that, seemingly,’ I remarked to the Dean,

who was smiling at the astonishment depicted in my face from observing the coolness of both master and scout.

" 'Quite a character,' he replied ; ' we have spoilt him almost ; but you will find him a civil and obliging servant, if you let him have his own way—which, by-the-bye, he *will* have. Now I must just call in here on a friend of mine, and will join you at the Vice-chancellor's in five minutes—you don't know your way, but if you follow that man you can't do wrong ; he is going to be matriculated too.'

" When the Dean had left me, I looked up St. Peter's Street, in which I could only see two human beings ; one a boy, about fifteen years of age, in a round jacket and nankeens ; and the other, a short stubby man in a shooting-coat, wheeling a barrow with a basket in it resembling those which at Fire-cum-Fume they call butterflats. It certainly struck me as odd that such a character as the man before me should be going to be matriculated, and with a wheelbarrow too ; but he was the only *man* in the street, so I thought I could not be wrong ; besides, I had heard from Dennis that tradespeople might if they pleased be matriculated, to enable them to trade in the University, instead of ' taking up their freedom' in the city. I, therefore, followed the barrowman up St. Peter's Street, into a fine wide street, called St. Giles's, with a row of trees on each side of it, like the *boulevards* in Paris. Here he was joined by a younger man in a shootingdress, with eight or nine shotbells round his shoulders and waist, and as many guns, doubles and singles, under his arms. They went on at a steady pace, and I followed about twenty yards in their rear for some distance ; indeed so far that I began to blame the Vice-chancellor for living so far from his work. At the end of the street a direction-post informed me that two roads which branched off there led, one of them, the left, to Woodstock and Birmingham ; and the other, the right, to Banbury, Bicester, and Brackley. The barrow-man took the latter, and, after pursuing it for about a hundred yards, turned short to the right down some ploughed land until he came to a grass meadow, into which he wheeled his barrow, and then, taking out a sort of square box, measured a hundred yards to the middle of the field, and pegged the box firmly to the ground.

" I was all this while leaning over the gate, watching his proceedings, and wondering what part, in the ceremony of matriculation, this box was to take. The cad with the guns called out ' Won't you come in, sir ? We don't charge nothing for looking on.'

" I walked up to him and asked him if the University gentlemen would be there soon, and if the Vice-chancellor was coming.

" ' Art arter ten precise—for the sweepstakes ; and art arter eleven for the grand match. But I never know'd the Vice-chancellor to attend,' said cad, depositing the guns against the barrow ;

and throwing the shotbelts on the basket, which caused a rustling as of winged birds, and a loud and continued *took-a-rooing* sort of noise.

“ ‘Are you going to enter?’ I inquired.

“ ‘Enter?’ said cad; ‘I’ve heerd talk of entering osses for a race and long-tails for a course, but we calls it trapping of ’em. I’m obliged to trap ’em now, ’cause father’s got too fat to stoop.’

“ ‘Cad senior then came up with a long line in his hand tied to the box, and, touching his hat, said, ‘Come to put your name down, sir, I suppose?’

“ ‘Yes,’ said I, ‘certainly; but do *you* take down the gentlemen’s names when they come to enter?’

“ ‘Allays does it myself, and then there’s no mistakes; besides which, Jim there ain’t out of his pothooks and hangers; how shall I put it down?’ said cad, taking out a dirty-looking red-covered book, with a clasp and pencil attached.

“ ‘Now the Dean had very kindly explained to me at breakfast-time the advantages and disadvantages of entering as *arm:fil:* and *gen:fil:* so I answered, ‘*Gen:fil:* if you please; it is quite as respectable and not so expensive as *arm:fil:* I am told.’

“ ‘J—e—n, jen, f—i—ll, fill,’ spelt the cad, as he wrote it down; ‘What college?’

“ ‘St. Peter’s,’ said I; ‘what’s the fee?’

“ ‘Two suvs each, and the losers to pay for the birds. Money down before you pulls a trigger.’

“ ‘Triggers!—birds!’ I exclaimed, ‘what *do* you mean?’

“ ‘Blue-rocks every one of ’em,’ said Jim, ‘and nice lively birds they is—all cotched last night at Wolvercot.’

“ ‘Really,’ said I, ‘I am quite in the dark; I came down on purpose to enter myself—and you—’

“ ‘Well! and ain’t you entered yourself? Here you are, Mr. Jenfill, of St. Peter’s, two pounds; you’ve only got to shell out the suvs, toss up for your turn, and go in and win if you can, but the odds is ten to two on Lord Straighteye. So, if you ain’t a good shot, you’d better hedge upon him.’

“ ‘But,’ said I, ‘I did not come here to shoot; I came to be matriculated before the Vice-Chancellor.’

“ ‘Vell! blow me particularly tight,’ said Jim, ‘if this isn’t about the werry rummiest go as I never did see! A gentleman coming to a pigeon match, and a mistaking of my werry respectable governor for the Vice-Chancellor! Isn’t it a rum start, eh, governor?’

“ ‘The queerest touch I ever saw,’ said cad *père*, and he and his son indulged in such an unanimous burst of laughter as made me sensible of my egregious folly, and almost tempted me to show them that though, from my cockney life, I had never seen a pigeon-match, I had been present at and profited by more than one boxing-

match ; but prudence fortunately, as it was two to one against me, asserted her empire over me, and I explained to the cads, whose inharmonious 'laughing chorus' was not yet ended, how the mistake had arisen.

" 'I twig,' said the senior cad ; 'you never conceived that the little genilman as walked up St. Peter's Street alongside of my bar-rer could be called a *man*—but he's a genilman of your own college, as comed up to get a—a—what do they call it as dead people leaves to the young uns to live cheap upon?'

" 'A scholarship?'

" 'No, that ain't it—a long word as the wild-beast-men makes use on.'

" 'Oh! an exhibition?'

" 'Ay, that's the ticket—as got an exhibition, and when once any little kivey becomes a 'varsity genilman, he is called a *man*, even if he's scarcely briched as some of 'em ain't—at Corpus for instance.'

" 'Well,' I inquired, 'what had I better do?'

" 'Have half-a-dozen pigeons and try your hand,' said Jim, 'now you ere here—we've lots of birds—only 15s. a dozen, and you may use ere a vun of these guns you like.'

"I declined his offer, not wishing to expose myself more than I had done by my egregious stupidity, and turned round to make the best of my way to college, when I saw the face of Joey Gumps over the gate explaining to fourteen or fifteen young men, who were enjoying it amazingly, the ridiculous error I had committed.

"I made a run at a gap in the hedge, and cleared it to the satisfaction of the cads *père et fils*, for they cried out together, 'Go it, my tulip, you'll come out some day.' Joey, who saw my leap, guessed that I had serious objections to facing the men who were amusing themselves at my expense, and came round to meet me.

" 'Never mind, sir,' said he, 'you ain't the first freshman as has made an ass of himself—'

" 'But I shall be too late for the Vice-Chancellor,' said I, 'and the Dean will think me exceedingly rude.'

" 'Don't *you* bother about that—leave that to *me*—*I* knows all about it—me and Mr. Neeldowne settles them ere things.'

"I proceeded under Joey's guidance to the Apodyterium, as they call the room where convocations are holden ; and, after a few jocular remarks from the Dean, was matriculated, paid my fees and caution-money, and took my leave of the Dean, promising to leave Oxford immediately and read hard till next term. But I broke this promise, as you know—for I met our friend Tom of St. Mark's, and here I am still, but I shall leave for Fire-cum-

Fume in a day or two, and give you a further insight into life at Oxford.

"Your's ever, my dear Ninny,

"C. WINKEY.

"P. S. Get up your articles, old fellow, for you'll have to subscribe to them when you enter—and our Dean says you ought to know something about them beforehand, or you are just as likely to go wrong as a man who sets up in the cab-line without knowing his way about London."

## CHAPTER XV.

AFTER the Easter vacation, which my hero and his friend Compo, more to their satisfaction than their governors', passed in London with several old Rotherwickians, they booked their places for Oxford, in the Blenheim coach. At the office was a Cambridge man, who was going down for a week, just to see the sister University, and to test the merits of the undergraduate port. Ninny and Compo agreed to secure the boxseat, and to toss up who should occupy it; but, on speaking to the porter at the Green Man and Still—the *homo viridis et tranquillus*, as some one has translated it—he told them the box was already taken by Mr. Splinterbars, of Christ Church, a gentleman who was so fond of coaching that he spent all his leisure time in going up and down the road, and was on the most intimate terms with Mr. Costar, the proprietor, and all the jehus in his service, but especially with Mr. Lynchpynne, the driver of "the Blenheim."

Now I, Peter Priggins, though I am speaking of "the Blenheim" in the days of its infancy—many years gone by—beg leave to recommend it now, in the prime of its life, to those gentlemen and ladies who prefer the lingering comforts of a well-horsed and well-conducted stage coach, to the rattling, smoking, steaming, screeching, and slinking annoyances of a railway train, with the risk of an "unexpected meeting" with their friends in the "up train," who have by mistake taken the same *line* of travelling as the *down* train. Charles Holmes, the driver, will not fail to show them that civility and attention for which he has been rewarded with a handsome silver cup, subscribed for by his old customers; among whom, the name of the greatest man of the age is proudly pointed out by the deserving possessor of the splendid tankard.

Ninny and his friend selected "the Blenheim," not so much for its superiority over the other Oxford coaches of that day, as from its *being driven by an old Rotherwickian*—for such was Lynch-



pynne. He was of a respectable family, who had sufficient interest with one of the governors of Rotherwick to get him placed on the foundation of that school. He passed through his seven years there creditably and quietly, being notorious for nothing but flanking a team of four sags in hempen harness round the green every day between school-hours, and giving half-a-crown to any one who could neigh as naturally as a coach-horse. Upon governors' days he was observed to select the best appointed carriage; and in driving round Rotherwick Square, to cut in and out and turn the corners more courageously and neatly than any of his competitors. The *meta fervidis evitata rotis* was the goal of all his wishes.

He left school and entered at Oxford with an exhibition; but, unfortunately, in going down to reside, the coachman trusted him with the reins for three or four stages. He could never rest quiet afterwards, except upon a coach-box or in the stable, and spent all his exhibition in treating coachmen and seeing them to let him drive. His studies were neglected, and hall and chapel cut almost every day. The expostulations, entreaties, and threats of his tutors and friends were all uttered in vain. He was imposed, sconced, and confined to college; but he got his impositions done by the barber, paid his sconces, and got over the college walls after dark to work the Worcester mail one stage out of Oxford and in again every night, though he knew he should be expelled if he were found out.

The tutors were justly incensed by his conduct, and tried every means in their power to detect him, and catch him *in ipso*; but it was no easy matter, for he was such a favourite with all the college servants, and behaved so liberally to them in the buttery, that they wisely thought they should gain a loss if they lost him, and, when questioned on the subject of his getting out of college at night, "never knowed nothing at all about it." His brother collegians, as a matter of course, admired his spirit too much to betray him, and were highly delighted at his success in "doing the dons." One or two, in a base attempt to imitate him and interfere with the *κρυδς* his determined resistance to the authorities had obtained for him, were caught out the first night, and rusticated accordingly, illustrating the truth of the old proverb, "one man may steal a horse out of a field, though another may not look over the hedge at him."

The truth of another "old saw" was shortly proved, "that an earthen pitcher may go once too often to the well;" for his tutor, finding all his attempts useless to discover Mr. Lynchpynne's "outgoings and incomings" by the agency of the college servants, determined to try a plan of his own. He sent his scout for change for a one-pound note, which, in those days, like foreign ambassadors, were "representatives of a sovereign," and went out of

college in what the members of the United Service call *mufti*, but members of the University *beaver*, which means not in his academics—his cap and gown. He walked about the regions of “the Angel,” and, when the Worcester mail drew up to give the passengers their ten minutes to suffocate themselves in endeavouring to get their *quid pro quo*—supper enough to compensate for three shillings, and sixpence the waiter, he, like Norval, “hovered about the spot, and marked” down the coachman. (Not a bad example that of an *anacoluthon*. P. P.)

“Coachman,” said he, stepping up to him, and depositing in his hand ten shillings of the change out of the one-pound note — “I want you to do me a favour.”

“Certainly, sir,” replied coachey, touching his hat with one hand, and pocketing the money with the other, “any thing to oblige so perfect a gentleman.”

“I want you to——”

“Bring you down a little fish, perhaps; sammun’s plentiful, but shrimps is scarce, and you Oxford gentlemen would never think of eating sammun about shrimps,” said coachey, in a gin-and-water voice, through the folds of three bird’s-eye “handkerchers,” and the collar of a Witney coat.

“You entirely mistake me,” said the tutor: “there is an undergraduate of our college, who acts on the principle *quid libet audendi*—I beg pardon—I mean of running all risks of rustication and expulsion, to indulge his *penchant*—I beg pardon—his—how can I express it? his—*propositi tenacitas*—I really beg your pardon—his insatiable love for driving—*hippocolazing*—I beg pardon—flogging horses; and gets over our walls every night and morning—*mane noctuque*—I beg pardon again—to drive one of the night coaches. You would oblige me greatly by giving me a *συνειση*—beg pardon again—a hint, a sure hint, by which I might——”

“Be down upon him, eh?”

“Yes; that is, detect him. What wheeled carriage does he direct?”

“What *what?*” inquired coachey, sending a *jet d’eau* through his teeth. “Oh, you mean what drag does he work!—the Champion—up in ten minutes—look sharp, and you’ll be sure to nab him—right, sir—time up—Bill, tune up your tin, and save the passengers an attack of indigestion.” The guard blew his horn. The insides and outs rushed out of the Angel grumbling, with their mouths full, and the coachman mounted the box; and, after assuring the tutor that he should be happy at all times to furnish him with information on the same terms, squared his elbows, and drove off.

Mr. Slink, the tutor, walked up and down the High Street, rubbing his hands from joy at the success of his scheme and the cold-

ness of the night, which at last grew so intense, that he slipped unseen into the coach-office, and sat himself down by the fire, behind a heap of luggage placed ready for stowing on board the Champion. He had not been thus comfortably seated above a minute, when the book-keeper and porter rolled into the office without seeing him, laughing so convulsively as to be obliged to hold their stomachs with both hands, and to raise a leg alternately to save themselves from bursting. Mr. Slink, being in a good humour, enjoyed it very much, and laughed internally.

"Jacobs," said Jack Hutton, in apoplectic tones, "did you ever?"

"No, never!" said Jacobs, and both book-keeper and porter laughed more convulsively than before. "To think his own tutor shouldn't know him!" said Jacobs.

"And to see him take it so *ex-ces-sive* cool! Pocketing the blunt, too—ten bob—to split upon himself," said Jack Hutton.

"And how well he imitated old Spooner's foggy voice," said Jacobs.

"Warn't it well?" said Jack. "And then to let him kick his legs about for an hour in the frost, waiting for the Champion!—Oh—if he'd only jine the perfession—he'd soon get to the top on it!"

"Better set up in the bacon trade," said Jacobs, "he's so good at *gammon*."

At this joke of the book-keeper, of course he and the porter laughed louder than ever. When it was over, between them they fully informed Mr. Slink that Mr. Lynchpynne had not only deceived him, and got his "ten bob," but putting on old Spooner's—the *veritable* Jehu's—voice and "toggerly," after putting the afore-said Spooner into *his* "upper togs" and the inside of the coach, but had positively sentenced him, Mr. Slink, to exposure to the "wintry wind" for the space of one hour, and was, doubtless, at that moment, entertaining the gentleman on the box of the Worcester mail with an account of his successful *ruse*. Mr. Slink also learnt that he would only drive to Benson, and "tool" the down mail back again; therefore, Mr. Slink slinked out of the coach-office into the coffee-room, and, ordering a mutton-chop and a glass of hot brandy-and-water, told the waiter to let him know when the Worcester mail came in, as he expected a friend by it.

The waiter, who did not know Mr. Slink, did as he was ordered; and Mr. Slink, looking over the blind, saw his *quarry* descend from the box, throw his whip to Jack Hutton and his "upper togs" on the pavement, and, after putting on his own hat and coat, and tossing off the glass of brandy-and-water that was brought out to him by the barmaid as a "regular thing," take the road to college; he, Mr. Slink, having paid for his creature comforts, and given the *disgusted* waiter threepence, rushed out and followed his man.

The unconscious Lynchpynne walked deliberately up "Logic Lane," humming

"With spirits gay I mount the box,  
The lits up to the traces," etc.

until he came to the "Hole-in-the-Wall," by which he gained access to the interior of his college and his own rooms.

"*Per fidem, universitati debitam! siste!*" cried Mr. Slink, catching hold of the skirt of his great-coat.

"Proctor, by Jove!" said Lynchpynne, kicking out behind like a colt in a break, flooring his tutor, and clearing the wall.

The porter, who let Mr. Slink into college, fully believed that he had been larking, and rewarded for so untutorlike an amusement by getting a bloody nose. He did not, of course, dare to demand the cause of the "sanguineous stream," nor did Mr. Slink feel at all inclined to be communicative, but went to his rooms, snuffling to the porter through his blood-stained, white muslin handkerchief, or nose-kerchief, and ordering him to tell Mr. Lynchpynne to call upon him immediately after chapel in the morning.

This message, and the description of his tutor's appearance, satisfied Mr. Lynchpynne of the impropriety of kicking indiscriminately, and induced him to anticipate his fate, by taking his name off the books *before* chapel on the following morning. He sold his books to purchase a box-coat and a broad-brimmed hat, expended his "thirds" upon top-boots and other "toggerly," and laid out the proceeds of his pictures and caricatures upon crops, lashes, and whipcord. He then went down to Mr. Costar, told him how matters stood, and requested employment.

The worthy coach-proprietor "rose at him" at once, and put him *upon* the Blenheim, upon the same principle as his horses were daily put to that excellent coach—to *draw* customers. His friends were annoyed—his college disgusted, and the University as a body, as they considered, degraded; entreaties, expostulations, reproaches, and threats were used to induce him to retrace the rash step he had taken, or at least to try another road—but no! as he said, "he had resigned all his hopes of advancement in life for his favourite occupation, and had mounted the box for *wheel* or *whoah*, he would not get off again for any body, nor would he exchange places, inside or out, with the Lord Chancellor or the Archbishop of Canterbury."

As far as the interests of the "concern" were concerned, the experiment of having a gentleman-coachman was successful; the Blenheim was always full, and the box-seat was a daily half-crown in the porter's pocket. Nor did Mr. Lynchpynne, we believe, ever regret exchanging the conduct of a suit at law for the management of a team of horses; as he was often heard to say, that if any one

wanted amusement, there was nothing like a coach for affording "good entertainment for man and horse."

Behind this favourite and highly favoured driver and his intimate friend, Mr. Splinterbars of Christ-Church, Ninny, Compo, and the Cambridge man mounted, and, as soon as they were off the stones and approaching the classic regions of "the Old Hat" on the Wycombe road, were exceedingly amused at the interest manifested by Mr. Splinterbars in the success of all Mr. Costar's coaches, and his evident knowledge of the private concerns of every driver on the road.

To exemplify this, one short dialogue must suffice.

"You did not see the mails come in this morning, Harry, I suppose?" inquired Mr. Splinterbars. "I went to meet them—Worcester full inside and out—Gloucester three ins and full out, and very good 'bills' for parcels—Black Prince short of passengers—mad woman inside—but heavy load of luggage—six outsides in the hardware line—bad journey for Tom Wiggins; they never give more than sixpence. By-the-by, has Mrs. Wiggins got the better of her nasty temper yet? She is the most vicious woman I know, always kicking over the traces; if I was Tom, I would drive her in a kicking-strap, with a Chifney bit, and double thong her all along the road of life."

"*Dux fœmina facti*," said Lynchpynne. "He'd better give her her head for a time, and, when she's inclined to pull up, lay it into her, and stop her allowance of corn. Nothing like short commons and no beans for a spirited one."

"Have you heard how Bill Brown's daughter is, that had the small-pox so bad?"

"Much to be *pitted*, the doctors say."

"Ah! ah!—not so bad, Harry! I'm very glad to hear that Charlton is done up. Entirely ruined—it serves him right; he had no business to set up an opposition against us."

"Poor fellow!" said Lynchpynne; "he was right in trying to get an honest living; the *res angusta domi* drove him to run against us."

"Then he might have begun with a pair," said Mr. Splinterbars, looking unmerciful. "How is Bess, the brown mare, that was lame before?"

"Not so bad as she pretends to be," said Lynchpynne; "merely a corn, I suspect, in her near fore-foot; but she makes out that she is worse than she is, and kicks and bites when they go to examine her. '*Nec se cupit antè videri*,' as Virgil says."

Every coach that they met was examined by Mr. Splinterbars—the number of outsides and insides counted, and the probable amount of the carriage of parcels guessed at; nor did he forget to ask every coachman that pulled up every particular concerning the

health, wealth, and prosperity of every member of his family—inquiring for every little whipcord by the name which his godfathers and godmothers had given him or her.

“The Cambridge man, who sat by the side of Ninny and Compo, did not venture to address either of them, upon the University principle, that you should never open your mouth or do the civils to any man to whom you have not been introduced; though his astonishment at hearing a stage-coachman quote Latin had very nearly induced him to violate so excellent a rule. Ninny and Compo were, of course, rattling away with Lynchpynne about old times at Rotherwick, which only confounded the Cambridge man the more. Now nothing pleased Lynchpynne so much as to astonish a passenger, who did not know his history, by a display of his classical acquirements. Mr. Splinterbars had often derived considerable amusement from these exhibitions, and at the first stage, where he got down to inquire after the health of a glandered horse, he gave him a hint to “improve the occasion” by victimizing the Cambridge man, whose name, as indicated by the brass plate on his trunk, was Browne.

As soon, therefore, as he had remounted his box, he turned round to Mr. Browne, and inquired if he were going down to Oxford to enter.

“Oh dear, no! I’m a Cambridge man,” replied Mr. Browne, looking very superior to Oxford. “I am merely going down to Oxford to see some old schoolfellows—Rugby men—and look at the place.”

“Oh, you were a Rugby boy, were you?” said Lynchpynne. “I knew the head-master, Dr. Sheepskin, well—a very clever man he was. We have capped verses together from Oxford to London many a time.”

“*You* cap verses with the doctor?” said Mr. Browne. “Come, that is rather *too* good.”

“If you doubt my ability,” said Lynchpynne, “though I am not much addicted to betting, I’ll lay you a mutton chop and half a pint of sherry, at the Red Lion at Wycombe, that I beat you, before we get to Uxbridge, in Greek or Latin, and this gentleman shall be judge,” pointing to Mr. Splinterbars, who readily undertook the office of umpire.

“Now then,” continued Lynchpynne, “name your language and metre—shall we try a few Greek hexameters? or, as you Cambridge gentlemen think much of Porson, shall we begin with iambs?”

‘αἶ, αἶ· παρίστης ὡς ἱοικ’ ἀγὼν μέγας.’

*Sigma, sir; now go on.*”

"Why, really I—that is—if—" stammered Mr. Browne, looking nervous, and very red.

"Were you not among strangers, you would be less unwilling to take up the cudgels; but I think I may venture to introduce you to these gentlemen—Mr. Splinterbars and Mr. Nincompoop of Christ Church, and Mr. Winkey of St. Peter's."

Each of these gentlemen bowed to Browne as his name was announced, and Browne looked more nervous and redder than before; but to assure them he was not above being on amicable terms with them, he thrust his hand into his pocket, and, pulling out a case, offered Mr. Splinterbars a cigar. The offer was politely declined, and Lynchpynne proceeded to torture his man by calling upon him again for an iambic commencing with a sigma.

"Why, I really—that is—I've no doubt I could—but—it seems so very absurd to cap Greek with a coachman! don't it?" said Browne, appealing to Ninny and Compo, and twiddling his cigar.

"Well! Latin then, if you prefer it," said Lynchpynne, "only it's rather low—all my horsekeepers use it."

"Your horsekeepers talk Latin? that's coming it *too* strong."

"Ay, and Greek too upon Sundays. Why, I would not keep a helper in my stables, who could not do a copy of Latin verses."

"You won't make me believe that without seeing and hearing it," said Browne, looking half offended.

"As your habits are mathematical, you shall have a proof at this public-house, where I will pull up for a glass of ale," said Lynchpynne, stopping at the Magpie and Horse-shoe, and addressing the head ostler thus—"Heus, puer! Da aquam equis meis, et dic tuo magistro ut cantharum cerevisiæ optimæ per-magnum quam citissimè efferat."

The ostler, who received the same order in English every day, washed the horses' mouths out, and told his master to bring out a large jug of best beer.

"Quod erat demonstrandum," said Lynchpynne. "I hope you are satisfied, sir?"

Browne looked queer, but took his turn at the jug as it passed round, to assure himself the order had been understood.

"Bonum est?" inquired Lynchpynne.

"Nullum dubium de illo," answered Browne, to show he could talk Latin if he liked.

"Satis superque, mi Gulielmicule," cried out Lynchpynne to the ostler, who was known by the name of little Billy, "*habenas refige*;" and little Billy began to "bear up" the horses, just as if he understood all that was said to him.

As soon as they were off again, Mr. Browne was solicited to comply with Lynchpynne's request; and after resorting to as many doubles and turns as a hare tries in a long course, to avoid making

an exhibition of himself, at last was driven to consent, and managed to dig up, out of the shallow soil of his memory, some half dozen Latin lines, implanted there from that excellent nursery, the Eton grammar.

"*Sæpe sinistra cava prædixit ab ilice cornix.*"

"Trouble you for an X," said Lynchpynne.

"*Xerxes in Italiam,*" began Mr. Browne.

"Name your author," interrupted Lynchpynne.

Mr. Browne could not, and not having another line ready, lit another cigar, and owned himself conquered:

"You see," said Lynchpynne, "you Cambridge men devote so much of your time to mathematics, and so little to the classics, that though full of Euclid and algebra, conic sections, and trigonometry, you are apt to forget your Latin and Greek. Now, at Oxford, the reverse is the case; we cherish and keep alive what are considered in other places the dead languages, by insisting on the tradesmen and operatives using them upon all occasions, under the penalty of being put in the stocks if they utter a word of English. As you are going to Oxford, and seem to have forgotten much of your Latin, it would be as well to purchase Valpy's Latin Dialogues when you get to Wycombe, or you will not get any thing to eat and drink, for the waiters at the inns have quite forgotten the vernacular."

Lynchpynne was backed in "cocking him up," as they call hoaxing a man at Rotherwick, by Mr. Splinterbars, Ninny and Compo, who, with very grave faces corroborated every lie he told, affirming that they, used as they were to talk Latin, had been often put to great inconvenience to translate off-hand the pure Ciceronian of their scouts.

When they arrived at Wycombe, Browne was reminded of his bet, and requested to take a share of the lunch, but he declined leaving the coach—politely requesting Ninny to tell the waiter to bring him out a biscuit and a glass of ale. This the waiter did, and being properly prepared by the hoaxers, replied to Browne's question, "*Quam multum?*" "*Tres denarios, et quid vis pro servo.*"

Browne gave him sixpence in fear and trembling, and determined not to open his mouth again until he got to Oxford, where he meant to hire an interpreter.

The joke was carried on with praiseworthy gravity, and Mr. Browne's feelings were wrought up to such a pitch of intensity when they got to Headington Hill, and Oxford, in all its beauties, burst upon his sight, that he leant forward and whispered to Lynchpynne—

"Mr. Coachman—I really am—that is, I am not—quite so ready with my Latin as I ought to be—want of practice—nothing else. Now I'll give you an extra half-crown if you'll set me down at



some little public-house outside the University, where they can understand English. Do now, there's a good fellow."

"I am very sorry I can't oblige you, sir," said Lynchpynne, "but the precincts of the University extend five miles round the city, and we are within a mile of it now, where English is entirely exploded; try your dog Latin, however, and perhaps the under-waiter may be able to guess at your meaning."

Browne felt ill and wretched; and, if an upcoach came in sight, made up his mind to get upon it and go back to London. Nothing of the kind appearing, he occupied the few minutes left to him between Marston Lane and the Angel, in making up a few sentences to insure him a dinner and bed, and in getting ready his fare and half-crown for the coachman. The moment the coach stopped he sprung off it and ran into the house, saying to the porter as he passed, "*Infer meum truncum*," which Jack Hutton did, being more intelligibly directed to do so by Lynchpynne, who, with the rest of the conspirators, was enjoying the miseries of the hoaxee immensely.

When Browne was ushered into the coffee-room by the waiter, he turned round, and in a very bold tone inquired, "*Quid est pro prandio?*"

"*Domme!*" said the waiter, scratching his head.

Which Mr. Browne thought was short for *domine*, so he varied his question and said,

"*Id est, quid habes in domo edere et bibere?*"

"Can't say I understand furrin languidges, sir," said the waiter, shaking his head mysteriously.

"Why, you speak English!" cried Browne.

"In course I do," said the waiter.

"My dear fellow! give me your hand—I'm so delighted to think I should light on the only man in Oxford who can speak English."

"What do you mean?" said the waiter, reluctantly taking Browne's offered hand in his, round the thumb of which a neat, white napkin was twisted, ready to bring in the first dish.

"Why you are all liable to be put in the stocks, ain't you, if you don't talk Latin? so the coachman told me."

"Oh I see, sir," said the waiter, "you came down with Mr. Lynchpynne, and he's been at his old tricks.

'All to astonish the Brownes,'

as the song says."

An explanation ensued, in which the early history of Lynchpynne fully accounted for his classical lore, and Mr. Browne, fearing to be pointed at as he walked the streets, as the Cambridge man who couldn't talk Latin, made a very bad dinner, and returned to London by the first coach.

Compo and Ninny gave Lynchpynne a very good dinner at the Mitre, and then went to supper with Tom Velox at St. Mark's, which, of course, was made digestible by sundry jugs of nightcaps ; no excess, however, was committed ; and Dennis, on their return to their inn, where they meant to sleep that night, seeing they were too sober, strongly recommended a little pale brandy and cold water ; and Ninny, having found his recipes so successful on former occasions, submitted without a murmur to a succession of glasses for himself and friend, until the two candles and every article of furniture in the room seemed to have doubles of themselves. Dennis then recommended one more glass each, which he knew he should have to drink for them, and sent in the under-waiter and boots to assist the chambermaid in getting them to bed.

## CHAPTER XVI.

ON the following morning Ninny and Compo parted, the former under the guidance of the porter at the Mitre, and the effects of the nocturnal overdose of cold without—a shocking bad headache—for his rooms in Canterbury quad, and the latter, under the impression that Dennis was the “*medicorum facile princeps*,” and an erroneous notion, that he had made a right honourable his friend for life, for his rooms in St Peter's.

As Ninny was crossing the High Street, and taking the nearest cut to Canterbury Gate, down Oriel Lane, he met three old Rotherwickians, arm in arm, with whom he had been on intimate terms when at school, and was not a little surprised to find his hearty salutation, “Hilloh ! old fellows ! how are you all ?” responded to by a very stiff bow from one, and a stare of horrified indignation from the others. As they passed on without taking any further notice of him, he felt very much inclined to follow them, and demand the reason of their giving him the cut direct, and if the reason did not prove satisfactory, to treat them as he had often done at school—give them a “good licking.” As he stood gazing at them with flashing eyes and flushed cheeks, the porter, who had seen the whole affair, and from long practice in Oxford matters easily guessed the meaning of it, said to him,

“Old schoolfellows, sir, I suppose?”

“Yes,” replied Ninny, “intimate friends, that I’ve licked many a time, and I’ll follow and lick them again now for daring to cut me in this way.”

“Excuse me, sir,” said the porter, setting down his luggage-barrow directly across the pavement, so as to block up the passage,

"but it's all your own fault; you're fresh, and not up to 'varsity *hetticut*."

"To what?" inquired Ninny.

"Hetticut, sir. You see when a gen'elman first comes up he musn't speak to nobody as doesn't speak to him first. They sits in their rooms for a week to receive calls, and then goes out and returns them. That's what they calls *hetticut*."

"That may be the case with strangers," said Ninny, "but it's too absurd for old cronies at school."

"It's the hetticut, sir, I assure you," said the porter, applying his straps to the handle of the barrow, and proceeding towards Christ Church, "and hetticut must be observed. Of course you've heard the old story about one gen'elman as wouldn't save another gen'elman from drowning, becos 'he'd never been interduced?'"

Ninny shook his head negatively.

"Haven't you? Well, it's a *fact*, that's all. The 'varsity crowner held an inquest on the body, and told the jury, that though the gen'elman might have save dhim by merely stretching out his hand, yet the hetticut of the 'varsity forbid any gen'elman to take any other gen'elman by the hand to whom he hadn't been regular interduced, and so they must bring it in accidental death; which they accordingly did, and clapped a deodand of 5*l.* 5*s.* on Stephen Davis's skiff, for upsetting a 'varsity gen'elman."

As Ninny smiled incredulously, the porter continued.

"It's a fact, sir, I knows it is; for though I didn't see it myself, it's been so well known for the last fifty years it must be true. It's a tradition as is handed down as a heirloom. But I'll tell you what I once saw with my own eyes. It was one rainy night as I was coming home from running up with the boats. I was just got upon the Folly Bridge, where the water's nigh twenty foot deep, when I saw a gen'elman, as I knew was the Honble Mr. Clencher, of St. Peter's, fall into the water, in trying to land from his skiff. As he was above the bridge, where there was not any punts, and I saw by the way as he kicked and struggled as Mr. Clencher couldn't swim, I ran round by the towing-path gate, meaning to jump in after him and have him out. Before I got to him, however, a gen'elman had thrown off his coat and waistcoat, and was just leapt in to save him. He drew him to shore, and I landed him, more frightened than hurt. Well, you never seed a man so grateful in your life. He called him his preserver, and all manner of names, and swore he'd never forget his kindness. Well, the gen'elman as saved him took him, all dripping wet as he was, to one of the barges, where he kept his rowing-dresses, and lent him a suit to go home dry in, and this made him more grateful nor before. Next day they *meets in High Street*, but Mr. Clencher walked straight on, keeping

his eyes steadily fixed on the weathercock upon St. Mary's steeple, and never said, 'how do you do?' even."

"He did not see his preserver, of course?" inquired Ninny.

"Just as plain as I sees you, sir; but he had found out from his servant as he was only a servitor of Christ Church, and it ain't the fitticup for tufts to associate with sich. *That's* a fact, at any rate."

This tale and the wheelbarrow arrived at their respective goals at the same moment, and Ninny found his rooms in readiness for his reception, through the exertions of my friend Broome, and Mr. Higgins, the private tiger, who had been hired and sent down by Lord Wastepaper, a few days before, for the express purpose. With the exception of their redolency of paste and fresh paint, the apartments were very desirable. The furniture which had been thirderd from the last occupant, a quiet reading man, was in a good state of preservation. The looking-glass was not even cracked, and the chairs and tables still had their legitimate complement of legs and arms. The only articles that appeared to have been used were a large reading-chair, a still larger reading-table, and an immense copper teakettle; which may be accounted for by the fact, that Ninny's predecessor was not only studious, but stingy, and never gave a party.

Ninny had but sufficient time to take a cursory view of his new abode, for ten o'clock was fast approaching, at which hour he was to accompany his tutor to the Vice-Chancellor's, to be matriculated; a ceremony that requires but a short time, yet costs a considerable deal of money. He next called upon the Dean, Dr. Pertinax Plotter, by whom he was not so graciously received as he would have been, had Lord Wastepaper been able to secure him an opportunity of saying "*nolo episcopari*," upon the death of the lamented Right Rev., etc. etc., the Bishop of Blank, who had been succeeded by a Cambridge man, though it was the "Oxford turn." Still his manner was not ungracious, though distant, as Dr.——, the Bishop of——, was any thing but well, and there were two dignitaries on his "list," whose health was on the decline.

After Ninny had taken his leave, it probably occurred to the Dean that he had not been so obliging and attentive to his patron's *protégé* as the chances of preferment indicated by his "list" demanded, for, soon after he reached his rooms, Ninny received a note to this effect:—

"The Dean will be happy to see the Honourable A. N. Nincompoop at breakfast to-morrow, at ten o'clock, and introduce him to a few of his best men.

"Deanery, Christ Church,

"May 5th."

To which Ninny, who had made all the proper arrangements with his friend Compo, replied—

“Mr. Nincompoop’s compliments to the Dean, and is sorry he cannot breakfast with him to-morrow morning, at ten o’clock, as he is going to Woodstock in a tandem at half-past nine, but will keep himself disengaged for the following day.”

Now as the Dean allowed his men to hunt and drive buggies as often as they pleased, but positively set his rubicund face against the dangerous and unstatutable practice of tandem driving, he was highly and justly offended at the receipt of this note; but the Bishop of——, he found by his letters which had just arrived, in the interim of the note’s being sent and answered, was *in articulo*, he merely sent a message by Broome, to intimate that the “leader ought to be sent on,” and that the following morning, at ten, would suit him equally well for seeing Mr. Nincompoop at breakfast. Although this may be considered judicious on the part of the Dean, as far as not losing a chance of succeeding to the Bishop of——, who was so decidedly vacating his see, yet some cavillers might think that it would not impress upon the mind of the *novus homo*, the freshman, that respect for college dignitaries, which ought to be the *primum mobile* of every man’s thoughts, words, and deeds, as long as he is in the university.

Ninny sat in his rooms, and began to think a college life an exceedingly dull one, and wished he might reverse the order of things, and go and call on some of his old friends first; but the hint given him about “varsity hetticut” by the porter at the Mitre was not lost upon him, and he resolved to act upon it, and not commit himself any further. What was he to do until dinner time, when he had promised to meet Compo at Tom Velox’s rooms at St. Mark’s, and dine in hall? He never could read, and as to walking out by himself he abhorred it. At last a lucky thought struck him.

“Higgins!”

“Sir,” replied that well-made, well-dressed, and well-conducted tiger, who was occupied in arranging his new master’s dressing-case and clothes in the bedroom.

“Higgins, do you know any thing about setting-to?”

“A little, sir. My governor keeps a sporting-ken in Tothill Fields, and has a long room where the gentlemen of the fancy take their benefits,” replied Higgins, looking very knowing.

“Capital, by George!” cried Ninny, in an ecstasy. “Go out and get a gallon of London porter, and two pairs of gloves somewhere. Here’s a note—pay for them, and bring me the change.”

Broome very properly prevented so unusual and improper a mode of proceeding as paying ready money for any thing, and the gloves were procured from old Quarterman’s in the cornmarket, on

lick, and a set of foils and singlesticks, with masks complete, from Messrs. Loder and Gunner, upon the same terms.

In less than one hour after Mr. Nincompoop's name was entered on the books of the above-mentioned respectable tradesmen, the little letter-box affixed to his "oak" was crammed to suffocation with cards and notes from winemERCHANTS, pastrycooks, tailors, bootmakers, and all sorts of tradesmen, soliciting the honour of the honourable gentleman's orders : so admirably is the system of "telegraphing" managed at the University. I doubt whether the adoption of the new electro-magnetic apparatus would be an improvement on the old plan by which I have known the news of Mr. Jones of Jesus having "come up to pay his ticks" or *chalks*, circulated amidst his tickers in half an hour ; and what is more surprising is, that every one of these tickers knew by instinct that out of the innumerable series of Joneses of Jesus who come in and go out every year like "hardy annuals," this individual, Jones, was the very man on *his* books. *Nacitur non fit propola Oxoniensis* ; which is the only way of accounting for his superior discrimination, and intuitive readiness in getting the earliest possible intelligence of every man's "coming up," who is likely to favour him with money or orders.

While these choice specimens of the genus sufferer were employed in leaving their cards in Mr. Nincompoop's oak, that gentleman was amusing himself by sparring with Higgins, who was very much astonished, and still more disgusted, to find that his new master was not only so theoretically, but also practically acquainted with the arcana of the sublime science of boxing as to be more than a match for himself. Astonished, I say, because he had never seen him at his governor's long room, and disgusted because his merciful determination not to knock his master down before the *last* round was not likely to be appreciated as it ought. Moreover, Higgins had been *Alnascharizing*—building *châteaux en Espagne*—ever since he had been engaged by Lord Wastepaper.

Among the aerial edifices which he had been erecting in his ardent imagination, the most pleasing was a public-house, or sporting crib, at the west-end, with a snug bar, furnished with the "choicest wines, spirits, and other compounds," and a very pretty barmaid—a parlour fitted with every convenience for conviviality, and its walls adorned with portraits of eminent prize-fighters, from the remote ages of Humphryes and Mendoza up to the present time ; and a long room of extraordinary dimensions, suitable for private tuition and public dinners. The sum required for the purchase of the lease and good-will of these cloudy but desirable premises was to be made up in a very short time from the savings of his wages, and by giving lessons in boxing at half-a-guinea an hour to his master and all his acquaintances. This visionary locale for

the enjoyment of his "*opium cum dignitate*," as Dusterly will insist upon miscalling it, was, like himself, effectually floored the very first round by a severe facer, put in so scientifically as to convince the receiver, Mr. Higgins, that the person who could administer such a straight hit from the shoulder needed none of his instructions. As he was no logician, and argued from particulars to universals, he drew the faulty inference, that, because his master was a proficient in the art of boxing, all the members of the University must be equally skilful in pugnacity.

The stimulus of the exercise, and several very large tankards of Barclay and Perkins, which Broome persevered in importing from the buttery, removed the headache and lowness of spirits under which Ninny had been suffering all the morning. The stomach and the muscles of his body, by a wonderful sympathy, like a newly-tuned pianoforte, recovered their *tone* together. The sets-to, or set-tos—for I know not which is correct, without referring to the classical columns of a sporting paper—became more animated, and in the last round Higgins received a blow, which sent him from the middle to the end of the room, where he fell and lay deprived of consciousness, from his head coming into collision with the sharp edge of the fender.

Ninny was showing his sorrow for the accident, and his inherent humanity towards a fallen foe, by recovering him from his lethargy with copious applications of brown stout, "exhibited" over his head and face by the aid of his neckcloth, which was the only *succedaneum* for a sponge within his master's reach.

In this charitable and interesting situation, Ninny was discovered by Mr. Eugenius Eupheme, the senior tutor, who had called to do the civils and usuals to his honourable pupil, and had gained access to his rooms, through the incautiousness of Broome, who had forgotten to sport oak, in his eagerness to get "one more" tankard of porter before the buttery was closed.

Mr. Eupheme gazed in mute surprise upon the extraordinary *tableau* (I was going to add *vivant* which would have been wrong, as the principal figure was temporarily defunct) presented to his eyes. Seeing a person on the ground apparently dead, and his honourable pupil covered with blood himself, and mopping the dead man's face, he became alarmed, and, rushing *down* the staircase, *up* which Broome was carefully climbing with the last tankard, for fear of injuring its cauliflower head, ran against him in turning the corner, and the three rolled together to the bottom of the staircase. The tutor was saturated with porter, which Broome very much regretted, as the buttery was shut, and no more could be obtained until dinner-time.

"Waste not thy valuable time on me, Mr. Broome," said Mr. Eupheme, looking benevolent, and warding off the pocket-

handkerchief with which my friend was going to wipe away the frothy stains of the brown stout; "but hasten and procure the immediate attendance of a medical practitioner."

"What, cut along and get a doctor, sir? No occasion for that—it's merely Mr. Nincompoop, the new tuft, setting-to with his tiger. He suffers from indigestion, and the doctors recommend strong exercise, and——."

"Brown stout?" inquired Mr. Eupheme, dispossessing his mouth and eyes of a considerable quantity of that liquid.

"Yes, sir," replied Broome; "there's a great deal of steel in it, and it makes 'em as hard as flints."

This, of course, was all pure invention on the part of my friend Broome, and, *out of Oxford*, would be unquestionably denominated a lie. *In Oxford*, however, expediency is the fundamental principle of our policy; and a scout, like a member of parliament, is not worth a farthing, who is not ready with "a reply."

Mr. Eupheme swallowed the invention with several addenda that were absolutely necessary to give the little fiction a colouring of reality, and reascended the stairs. On entering the room he found Ninny putting on his clothes, and Higgins sitting against the wainscot sobbing convulsively, and looking excessively bewildered. His rolling eyeballs betrayed the confused state of his thoughts, which were a sort of amalgam formed of a mixture of rage, pain, disappointment, premeditated revenge, and a sulky kind of respect for the respectable college dignitary before him.

From this unpleasant state Broome relieved him by carrying him into his master's bedroom, and tying up his bleeding head with a silk handkerchief well soaked in the "best white-wine vinegar," manufactured from stale table-beer.

Mr. Eupheme, to his pupil's great surprise, "begged to express his sincere and deep regret at his being compelled by the faculty to resort to such strong measures to rid himself of that painful and distressing disorder, dyspepsia," and then commenced a learned exposition of his views of a course of college-reading. He next recommended and wrote down a list of a few books necessary for the commencement of the course, advising Ninny to purchase the best and newest editions, as a groundwork for the foundation of a well-selected classical library.

As the list contained a hundred and fifty books, of whose existence he was before ignorant, Ninny was quite dismayed, and wondered how he, who had not read through six books in the seven years he had passed at Rotherwick, was to skim through or even turn over the leaves of so many in one term. He felt sick of college by anticipation, and began to regret that he had not urged Lord Wastepaper to procure him a commission in the army, where he should have *no reading, and nothing to do but to walk about arm-in-arm with*



his brother officers, smoke cigars, and kick stones into the river from the bridge of the country town in which his regiment might happen to be quartered.

Mr. Eupheme, too, alarmed him by talking, as he was wont, over-learnedly, and making use of the longest and most carefully-compounded words in his vocabulary, rigidly adhering to the quantity of each in its original language.

He talked of Ovid's metamorphôses—the encyclopædia—illative conversion—dative, accusative, vocative, and ablative cases; and astonished Ninny quite as much as he once did the college-gardener by ordering him to sow plenty of *convolvuli majores*.

Poor Borecole scratched his head and declared, "he never had heard of sich a flower; there was *volvilus majers* and *volvilus miners*, but no sich things as *volvili jores*, he was sartain."

After concluding this "little prospectus of his views for the gradual development of the mental energies," and giving a short exposition of his notions of academical discipline," Mr. Eupheme kindly shook his pupil by the hand and left him in a positive state of mental misery, from which he tried to relieve himself by whistling *dulce domum* out of tune, until the tears ran down his cheeks.

Just as he was pondering on the expediency of ridding himself of his miseries by committing suicide or running away from college, a rat-tat-tat at his door roused him, and "come in," uttered in a tone of deep despondency closely resembling a groan, introduced his former acquaintance and schoolfellow, the Honourable Peregrine Tittleback, who had come up to put on his bachelor's gown, and hearing of Ninny's arrival and having nothing else to do, resolved to amuse himself by astonishing the weak mind of our hero by his superior attainments in college and worldly matters.

Mr. Tittleback, after getting through his great-go by a shave, had spent a whole month in London, and upon the strength of having dined once with "an officer in the guards," danced with a *femme passée* at Almack's, and betted five pounds upon the Derby, fancied himself "a man about town," and "up to all the newest dodges."

It is almost needless to say he wore his bachelor's gown, because no man who has accomplished the difficult task of getting his B. A. degree can persuade himself to appear without the bit of silk or bombazine, with full, long sleeves, which indicates his success, for the first week or ten days after he has put it on.

Ninny, who was not yet acquainted with the different gowns which mark rank and degree in the University, thought that the stylish gentleman in a rich twilled silk bachelor was a don of no ordinary importance, and salaamed him very respectfully, which made him appear much more amiable in the eyes of his visitor. He fixed his gold eye-glass scientifically beneath his upper eyelid, and

extended one finger of his right hand with a gracious "Ah, Nincompoop! how are ye?" which was then considered "the correct thing."

"I beg pardon," said Ninny, not accepting the proffered finger for fear of displaying too great familiarity to a don; "I really cannot—"

"Recognize an old schoolfellow in a man of the world—eh? Why, really a few years, a diligent attention to personal embellishment, and the habits and manners acquired in good London society, do make a very considerable alteration for the better," said Tittleback, raising his eye-lash, and allowing the eye-glass to fall gracefully upon his waistcoat. "You recollect the Honourable Peregrine Tittleback at Rotherwick?"

"Certainly," said Ninny, shaking the proffered finger very gently, for he still doubted whether the person before him, and who stood about five feet eight, was the same whom, as a boy at school, he used to fancy a "regular strapper," and whom he, being rather above than under six feet, now o'ertopped by some four or five inches.

"You must dine with me to-day at my lodgings," continued Tittleback; "you'll not meet a noisy party—that's not the correct thing—only Lord Balamson—you know he's heir apparent to the dukedom of Scratchback—and the Marquis of Rattlebones—his governor married an actress of all work, and improved the noble breed by the injudicious cross. You will make a fourth, and we can have a little chicken-hazard or hookey. You need not stake more than ponies if not convenient. By the bye, is your book full for the Derby? Spiderlegs is first favourite, and, if you want to hedge, I'll get a friend to take the odds against him."

"I am sorry to say," replied Ninny, blushing as deeply as if he was committing a great sin, or saying something improper, "that I do not understand betting—as yet."

"Never mind—I'll give you the office—you must come up to town—that's the correct thing—but you must not let Balamson and Rattlebones know that you don't bet, it's positively not the correct thing. We dine at seven, and my lodgings are at Snuggins's, in High Street—an everlasting ticker and no mistake."

"I am sorry I cannot accept your invite," said Ninny; "for I am engaged to dine with Tom Velox, at St. Mark's, with my friend Compo."

"Velox? Compo? Who the devil are *they*?"

"Old Rotherwickians. You must remember them."

"My dear Nincompoop! We men about town have too many engagements to allow us to remember any one below a peer or a commoner with an infinity of tin. Velox? Velox? Haven't the re-

mostest recollection of such a man ; and, as to Compo, I never heard such a devilish odd title in my life—what are they?”

“Capital good fellows,” said Ninny ; “regular bricks, I can tell you.”

“You mistake me,” said Tittleback ; “I mean are they visitable—that is, gentlemen commoners?”

“Why, Tom Velox is a scholar of St. Mark’s, and Compo is a commoner of St. Peter’s, and both are gentlemanly fellows,” said Ninny.

“Fellows ! Men, you mean. None of the men are called fellows in Oxford, unless they have got fellowships, and devilish snug things they are for the indigent middle classes. But you must cut both these men—it won’t do to associate with them—it’s decidedly *infra dig.*”

Ninny, besides being really attached to his old schoolfellows—especially Compo—was too good-natured to hurt the feelings of any one, and felt unwilling to comply with Tittleback’s suggestions. That gentleman, however, instead of resorting to argument to convince Ninny of the impropriety of associating with out-college men beneath the grade of gentlemen commoners, very coolly sat down and wrote a couple of notes in his name to Velox and Compo, which he despatched by Broome, intimating to both those gentlemen, that in future all further intimacy between them must cease, as not being “the correct thing.”

Ninny, when the notes were read over to him, was indignant and inclined to refuse sending them, but, being cursed with an inability to say “No”—an impotency of negation, as my friend the professor expresses it—he allowed Tittleback to have his own way.

Tom Velox took no notice whatever of the insolent conduct of Ninny. Winkey, however, who had been boasting all the morning to every man to whom he had been introduced of his extraordinary intimacy with his honourable friend, Nincompoop of Christ-Church, was so exceedingly galled, that he wrote to his governor, and that respectable elderly gentleman expostulated with Lord Wastepaper on the subject : but, finding his expostulations unattended to, he inflicted the severest punishment he could upon his former patron, by not only refusing to insert his “few little remarks” as usual, but by not even abusing him, in *The Scarifier*.

As Compo Winkey will not come upon the stage again, it will be as well to mention here, that after a rather successful career at college, and, being called to the bar by virtue of having eaten sundry commons in Lincoln’s Inn, he succeeded his father as editor and proprietor of *The Scarifier*, and wrote a weekly leader, the tendency of which was decidedly anti-aristocratic and bitterly abusive of the family of the Fuddleheads, which was lugged in upon all occasions, without the slightest regard to relevancy.

Fortunately for the Fuddleheads, he did not confine his abuse to that honourable family, but extended it to an Irish gentleman, who ventured to differ with him in politics, threatening to beat him as Punch does Judy in the show, and in consequence received so severe a drubbing with an "iligant little bit of an oaken plant," as caused his exit.

"From this world of woe."

The Irish gentleman, fancying himself a bit of a poet, and willing to make the dead man some compensation for the untoward "little bit of a blow" he gave him, wrote what he was pleased to term his *epithet*, thinking to immortalize him. It ran thus :

"Here Winkey lies, who always lied of yore,  
And though it may look like a paradox,  
He must lie on, though he can lie no more,  
Lying 'cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd,' within his box."

I, Peter Priggins, am no great judge of poetry, but it strikes me that this effort of the Irish muse is not very complimentary. Mrs. P. does not regard it in a serious light, but says it is a mere *Judy's spree*.

Ninny dined with Tittleback and his friends, Balamson and Rattlebones, with whom he was much pleased, as they were fast men, and, though still undergraduates, had seen a great deal of life. Balamson was a live racing calendar, and knew the dam and sire of every horse, mare, and colt in the United Kingdom, and could tell you the "names, weights, and colours of their riders." He got good and early information from the different racing-stables, and was on very intimate terms of friendship with old John Day, Isaac Sadler, and other tiptop trainers. He had a share in one or two promising colts, and made up a pretty good book in a small way. He meditated great things as soon as he should be emancipated from college and paternal discipline, and come in for a considerable sum of ready money, which he was to do at twenty-five years of age ; indeed, the height of his ambition and the subject of all his day-dreams was to be the owner of Eclipse N<sup>o</sup>. 2. He kept a tolerable stud up at Oxford, and hunted regularly six days a week during the season. In the summer terms he got up a few sweepstakes and hurdle-races, which came off in Port Meadow or Bullingdon Green, until the authorities interfered, when the scene was changed to the remoter regions of Abingdon or Colsford race-courses.

Rattlebones, though he hunted and made up a betting-book, was more celebrated for athletics and mischief. He was a great shot, both at the trap and across country ; kept a kennel of high-couraged, galloping pointers, and notoriously good, mute, short-legged spaniels. He had also a choice collection of terriers, who ri-

valled the celebrated Billy in annihilating rats and drawing badgers. In boxing, wrestling, fencing, singlestick playing, rowing, cricketing, running, leaping, and other gymnastics, he greatly excelled, and could spur and handle a cock as cleverly as Charley Eastup himself. As for mischief, nothing from a window-fastening up to a weather-cock was safe within a mile of him. He was strongly suspected of being the person who sawed off a very tall and graceful maypole, which was erected at Nettlebed, and furnished with a handsome brass-plate in commemoration of some great victory achieved by a neighbouring gentleman.

Dusterly says, I shall be accused of showing up some marquis of the present day under the name of Rattlebones, but I beg distinctly to deny it, and to assure him in particular, and the public in general, that no *young* marquis of these days was *invented* at the time of which I am writing.

One little bit of mischief I must relate, it was so admirably conceived and executed, and the moral it was intended to convey was so unexceptionable.

Fisherton, a little town about twenty-five miles from Oxford, was a favourite resort of Rattlebones, on account of the facilities it afforded for indulging in the elegant and interesting amusement of flyfishing. The river, which abounds in trout, for two miles below the town is, or was, rented by the landlord of *the* inn, for the town boasts of but one; and any gentleman, upon the payment of a mere trifle for a ticket, might indulge his propensities for whipping, and fancy himself Xerxes flogging the Hellespont.

Rattlebones threw a fly beautifully; it lighted on the water as lightly as the natural ephemeral it was intended to represent, and no trout, with aldermanic propensities, could resist "rising" to pay his respects to it. At Whitsuntide, when the mayfly is generally up, he used to spend the two days' vacation, which divides the Easter from the Act term, at the Red Lion at Fisherton; and although he was successful in filling his creel and thinning the river, he was a welcome guest with the landlord, in consequence of the liberal manner in which he paid his bills without examining the items. This landlord, Tom Drainer, was a civil and obliging fellow; but he had, as most of us have, one fault—one favourite sin. He got drunk every night—which many landlords do; but then he beat his wife—which most landlords do *not* do; "The gray mare," as Dusterly says, "being generally the better oss." Of this fault, Rattlebones, who pitied the meek and pretty Mrs. Drainer, whose eyes were too dark to require any additional blackness from her husband's fists, was determined to cure him; and thus the cure was effected.

In the suburbs of Fisherton dwelt one Aminadab Pipkins, a short, stumpy, stunted homuncule, who, as he expressed it, had "re-

tiwed from London to enjoy the wuvalities of the countwy for the remainder of his life." In a close court in the city, which, though small, was a great thoroughfare, he had rapidly realized a large fortune by manufacturing soups and alamode beef, to which his customers were enticed by a display of salads, quite irresistible in the musty, fusty, dusty climate of the east. In his window, amidst a bed of purely-bleached curled endive, nestled lettuces of enormous growth, mustard and cress of the true emerald tint, celery tastefully twisted into the most picturesque forms, and gracefully decorated with strings of the deep red beetroot. Under the little card that announced the presence of "real mock turtle," was the head of a large calf with the skin on, that had evidently committed suicide in attempting to swallow an enormous lemon which he still retained between his teeth, as an *ex-post-facto* evidence of his crime. By the aid of these enticing bails, he got his customers to bite so freely that, as he said, "he was a *kining* of money all day long." After having "kined" sufficient to justify him in exchanging the odours of *alamode* for the perfume of the violet, and the foul atmosphere of London for the pure air of the Berkshire downs, he disposed of the lease and goodwill of the soup-shop, and purchased the cottlage in the suburbs of Fisherton.

Here he displayed his taste by dismantling the ivy, roses, jasmines, and honeysuckles, with which the porch, walls, and windows were covered, and substituting in their place formal lattice-work, upon which he trained scarlet-runners and nasturtiums, as he said, "to make the pwopewty mowe pwofitable." The shrubs, which grew in natural profusion and luxuriance, were rooted up and replaced by straight, round, and three-cornered beds filled with cabbages, and edged with mustard and cress, parsley and spinage.

But his great delight was in plaister "staties" painted *au naturel*. There were *the* Duke and his great rival, Charles Fox and Mr. Pitt, stuck in the middle of a patch of savoy or winter-stuff, and in the midst of all

"The heathen gods and goddesses so fair,  
Bold Neptin, Vanes, and Nicodamus,  
All standing naked in the open air;"

as says "the Groves of Blarney." But his *pet* statue was a leaden one of Diana, as large as life, which he had the luck to pick up at a glazier's in Fisherton, and upon which he lavished a great deal of money for a sign-painter to represent her with rosy cheeks, bright blue eyes, and flowing black hair. He was so satisfied with her appearance, that he had her placed as near as possible to his gate that she might attract the passers-by, and secure the admiration which she, in his estimation, merited. She was certainly a lioness with all the school-children, who came from every village round to admire "*Pipkins's pretty lady*."

Rattlebones had often gazed with a mischievous eye on this Diana, and was determined to have her. He stood gazing at, and pretending to be lost in admiration of her while old Pipkins was walking among his cabbages, and, as he passed the gate raised his hat politely, and begged as a great favour that he might be permitted to enter the garden and examine so classical an image more closely. Pipkins was delighted; he not only admitted Rattlebones, but insisted upon getting out two chairs and a table, and treating him with a bottle of ginger-pop while he admired her at his leisure. This was all the marquis wanted, and he returned to the Red Lion determined to put into execution a scheme he had thought of the night before.

Tom Drainer, who was about three-parts drunk, was summoned to receive orders for supper; and after supper invited in to talk of the favourite holds for the heaviest fish, the favourite throws, and other matters in which anglers delight. He was well supplied with brandy-and-water by Rattlebones's servant, and, in fact, made more drunk than usual. At last he fell from his chair, and was carefully laid upon a sofa, where he was left to recover from his inebriety.

About two o'clock in the morning Tom awoke, and wondered where he was, and where the deuce his wife, and the candle, and the bar, and the bottles and glasses were. He scratched his head, until the titillation brought to his mind all the events of the evening, and he resolved to go up stairs and give Mrs. Drainer "a good hiding" for not having him put to bed as usual. He groped his way to the bar, and finding his favourite chastiser—a large ashen stick—stumbled up stairs with it, and, pulling aside the curtains, put certain queries, in very strong language, to the lady in bed, to which he obtained no answers.

"———You won't speak, won't ye? Then take that," said Tom; and after applying the stick till he was tired, and surprised at his wife's not alarming the house, as she usually did, he uttered two or three very satisfactory oaths at her obstinacy, and undressed himself and got into bed. Just as he was falling off to sleep, it occurred to him that he ought to make his wife beg his pardon, and, as the readiest way of ensuring her obedience, he sat up in bed, and taking as good an aim at her eye as he could in the dark, struck her a tremendous blow. He was surprised to find that his knuckles seemed to suffer more than his wife's face, and putting out his hand to feel for her nose, to try if that feature were more tender, he was dreadfully alarmed to find her face as cold as ice, and quite stiff; his hands, too, were all wet with a thick clammy substance, and it occurred to him all at once that he must have murdered her with the stick. The fright and horror of such a crime quite sobered him; and, after a few minutes of horrible hesitation how to act, he resolved to go down stairs and procure a light. His horror was con-

siderably increased at seeing, by the light of the match, his hands and the sleeve of his shirt completely covered with blood. He rushed up stairs, and there he found the pillow, sheets, and the face of his victim, one mass of gore. He fell upon his knees, and called upon his dear wife, in all the endearing terms he could muster; then he rose and walked up and down the room, meditating, in horrible agony of mind, upon what was best to be done. He suddenly resolved to carry the body down and bury it in the brewhouse, but, upon trying to lift it, found it too heavy for his strength, and it fell on the floor rigid and inflexible. He then determined to run for a doctor, and tell him his wife had broken a bloodvessel, or tumbled out of bed, or some other falsehood; but just as he was going to the door for the purpose, he was alarmed at hearing footsteps upon the stairs, and still more so at seeing his door opened, and the marquis and his servant enter. He fell upon his knees and confessed his crime at once, begging and entreating them not to give him up into the hands of justice. A constable was, however, sent for, and he was handcuffed and placed in the cage in the centre of Fisherton for the night.

It is needless to say that he passed a night of sleepless misery. He went through, in imagination, his examination, committal, trial and execution. He heard the people congregating in the morning round the cage, and he was afraid of being torn to pieces by a justly-enraged mob. As the shouts approached nearer and nearer, his agony increased; but when the key was applied to the lock to open the door that would expose him to the view and execration of thousands, his agony increased to such a degree that he fainted. Upon recovering from his fit, he was surprised to find himself seated on a sort of platform, which was carried by half-a-dozen men, by the side of "old Pipkins's pretty lady," with her face smudged over with red-ochre, and dressed in the nightgear of his wife, who, alive and well, was walking at the head of the procession with the marquis, bearing in her hand the identical ashen stick with which he fancied he had murdered her the night before. Amidst the jeerings, hootings, and revilings of some hundreds of his fellow-townsmen, the beating of drums, and the clatter of marrowbones and cleavers, he was carried to the Red Lion, followed by old Pipkins himself, in a dreadful state of anxiety, lest his "favouwite statty of Dianny" should fall and be injured.

It will be readily understood that the marquis and his servant, after depositing Tom upon the sofa, had stolen Diana from her pedestal, and with the consent of Mrs. Tom, who really was afraid of being murdered some night, placed the leaden lady in her bed. Old Pipkins forgave the lark, as soon as Diana was safely reinstated; and Tom Drainer never attempted to beat his wife again.

*Titteback* knew little and cared less about the pedigree of horses



and dogs, but in humans he was very great; and, as I have said in a former number, knew the red-book by heart. He betted a little and played a little, because it was the "correct thing;" but his forte lay in what was then called dandyism—he was essentially a lady's man. He cultivated his whiskers with patient industry and bear's-grease, and was a great patron and consumer of oils for the hair. The goal of his wishes was to have his name enrolled amongst the members of the best clubs, to give the Tittleback cut for a coat to some first-rate schneider, and keep a Tittleback mixture at Fribourg and Treyer's. He did not indulge in any gymnastic exercises, dreading the influence of the sun and air upon his complexion, and fearing lest the handles of cricket-bats and oars should blister and spoil his hands. He took one lesson in boxing from Mr. Eales; but having received a facer from that scientific gentleman, which not only caused his nose to bleed plentifully, but left a slight enlargement of that prominent feature, and discoloured a neighbouring eye, he declined persevering in an amusement attended by such disfiguring contingencies.

Though he differed in these respects from his friends Balamson and Rattlebones, he cordially agreed with them in being an idle man. He never read more than he was compelled to do, by the aid of cribs and cramming-books, to get him a degree, with just sufficient of the columns of some fashionable journal to make him *au fait* to the court circular, and the "arrivals and departures" of his fashionable friends.

With these three men Ninny was quite delighted—they were after his own heart, as the saying is. Though shy at first, and fearful of incurring the ridicule of men of such varied and superior attainments, he soon gained sufficient confidence to display his incipient talents in laying and hedging a bet, talking of the first favourite for the St. Leger, and calculating the odds upon the caster and the chances of an *après*.

He cut lectures and chapel in spite of the lectures of the dean, and the weak but well-meant expostulations of Mr. Eugenius Eupheme, his tutor; but was very regular in his attendance at Bullingdon and Cowley Marsh, where he soon became notorious as the best batter and bowler of his day. He acquired considerable celebrity, too, by thrashing the biggest bully in St. Thomas's, a masculine muscular bargeman, whom he beat so soundly for running against his skiff in Ifleylock, that he narrowly escaped being "had up" for manslaughter before my Lord judge at the next assizes.

Under the able tuition of Stephen Davis, Ninny became such a proficient in rowing, as to pull No. 7 in the Christ Church boat to the stroke of Rattlebones, who was the best oar in Oxford. A little *adventure* which occurred in practising shall conclude this number.

The usual mode of practising in Oxford is, to pull with some ex-

perienced hand in a two-oar from Oxford to Iffley and back, racing pace all the way, and Ninny had got into such excellent training with Stephen, that he resolved to have a pull down to Sandford; and, upon communicating his intention to Balamson and Rattlebones, they agreed to make up a four, and take Tittleback down as a sitter. They were obliged to hire a cad to steer, as Tittleback declined doing so for fear the tiller-ropes should blister and disfigure his hands. It was agreed to have a fish dinner at Sandford, where there is a little public, which is used by the Oxonians for the same purpose as Sirly Hall is by the Etonians, and Batchelor's, at Putney, by the cockneys. It was in those days as celebrated for its homebrewed and freshwater-fish dinners, under the superintendence of the landlady, Mrs. Davis (no relation of Stephen's), as it is now for every thing edible and drinkable, "provided on the shortest notice," by Burgess and his attentive wife.

The party reached Sandford safely and quickly without any adventure befalling them worthy of record, excepting the evident annoyance of Tittleback at having his immaculate whites spotted and splashed by the spirits of Stephen, who, of course, pulled stroke; and, as he had not had above two quarts of beer and three glasses of brandy-and-water before he started, was in excellent wind. A dinner of Spitchcock'd eels and underdone beefsteaks was ordered, and the interval required for its preparation filled up by a succession of games at quoits and skittles, at which all the party, save and except Tittleback, were expert players.

The dinner proved excellent, and all did justice to it, particularly Stephen, who ate most voraciously of eels, of which he was particularly fond, to the horror of Tittleback, whom he informed of the fact that "Those d—d heels halways made im hill, and yet 'e couldn't elp heating hof 'hem when 'e got ha chance." This was not very agreeable intelligence to a delicate gentleman who had to sit immediately before him in a voyage of five miles.

After dinner, the party adjourned to the skittle-alley, where lots of punch, strong beer, and cigars, were ordered to be carried for consumption between the heats. Stephen played and drank beer till the "heels begun to hoperate," when he retired to prevent an unpleasant catastrophe by the application of a series of brandies-and-waters, under the able administration of the landlady.

Stephen's retirement spoilt the side; and, as Tittleback resolutely refused to dirty his fingers by handling the ball, they had serious thoughts of pulling home again to have a little hazard, when three of the men from the neighbouring mill, which was then used for grinding corn, came in from their work to enjoy a game and a pot of beer. As these men were very famous players, a challenge was immediately given and received, much to Tittleback's disgust, who thought the neighbourhood of a snob was not "the correct thing."

He therefore withdrew into the remotest corner with a cigar, though albeit unused to fumigation, and having once returned a box of cigars because they smelt so very strong of tobacco. The consequence was that he got very tipsy in a short time, and was forced to seek the advice of Stephen, who was getting very drunk fast. He filled up a glass of hot brandy-and-water, and presented it to the disgusted Tittleback, telling him to "down with that and up with the heels, and he'd soon be right."

In the alley the game was very interesting; first the snobs won, and then the gentlemen, and of course each victory was celebrated, and each defeat consoled by copious libations of beer and punch—an amusement the snobs promoted, as they knew they should have nothing to pay. When it grew almost too dark to play any longer, for all the party confessed they could not see the pins clearly, cigars and pipes were lighted, and the snobs induced to sing a song, the gentlemen to join chorus and make speeches: then, unluckily, somehow or other, fighting and wrestling began to be talked about, and, after a little time, trials of strength were proposed, which led, as is usually the case, to a quarrel, which ended, as usual, in a fight; and, I regret to say, that after being on such friendly terms with them for so many hours, Ninny and his friends gave the snobs a tremendous "licking," and then a tremendous quantity of strong beer to allay the pain of their bruises. The score was paid, and they left the alley to find Stephen and Tittleback, and return to Oxford; but both those individuals were too far gone to sit in the boat, so they agreed to walk to Oxford and leave the cad to tow Stephen and their friend back in the bottom of the four-oar, which, as he was rather "consarn'd in licker," was not an easy task, and they must have slept on the "midnight-deep," had not a barge come up and taken them in tow.

As Rattlebones never left any place without doing a little mischief, he amused himself by putting two dozen of eggs under the cushion of the landlady's chair, and emptying the sugar-basin into her bonnet, which hung upon a hook in the beam; then, wishing her a polite goodnight, pulled down the signboard which misrepresented a fish of some sort, and threw it into the Isis, and, to prevent it being fished out again that night, locked the outer door and threw the key after it.

As they proceeded through the village of Sandford to gain the highroad, he contented himself with letting the sheep out of farmer Allen's fold, and removing the gates from the farmyard, to allow the cows an opportunity of relieving themselves from the irksomeness of confinement.

No opportunity of showing his capabilities presented itself, until, *after crossing the church-close*, they arrived at the turnpike-gate; *this was lifted carefully from its hinges, and deposited in a neigh-*

bouring ditch, which must have saved pikey an immensity of annoyance during the night, and the travellers a great many threepences and sixpences.

The road was very dull until they reached Littlemore, where they fortunately found a public with a farmer's horse hung up to the wall by its bridle. To take off this, and allow the horse to go where he pleased, was the work of a moment. The noise of his horse's shoes on the hard road roused the farmer, who ran out to see what was the matter as fast as a heavy pair of topboots and a large Witney topcoat would allow him. He instantly accused Ninny, who happened to be nearest to him, of loosing his nag, and threatened to lay a heavy whip, which he held in his hand, across his shoulders; for which piece of impertinence, Rattlebones and Balamson, seizing his Witney each by one skirt, by a sudden jerk ripped it up from the waist to the shoulders, and, wrapping the skirts round his arms, made them act as a very effective straightwaistcoat.

The shouts of the farmer, who bellowed for help as loudly as one of his own bulls, brought out several clods, who were doing their best to fulfil the orders of the Act of Parliament—"to be drunk on the premises"—and a general fight ensued, in which "blood" was getting the better of "bone," until the noise increased so greatly as to arouse the neighbouring cottagers, who, thinking that Mr. Swing was being apprehended for firing ricks, hastened to the spot with lanterns and pitchforks.

Rattlebones was too good a general to suffer himself to be outnumbered, so he beat a retreat, and the trio, disengaging themselves from the *mêlée* by a few well-applied blows, and, starting off at the top of their speed, soon distanced their pursuers. They arrived safely at Tittleback's lodgings, Rattlebones having done nothing in his road but pull up a few of Mr. Costar's best early Yorks, and give them to Jack Hutton's pigs; carried off Hewitt the barber's pole, and Betteris's sign, the "Oxford Arms."

Tittleback had just got home, and was reclining on his sofa, feeling very ungentlemanly at having got intoxicated, which was not "the correct thing," and indignant at being called "old fellow" by Stephen Davis, who was sitting opposite to him, enjoying a tankard of Snuggins's admirable ale.

On the following morning the farmer, who had traced the party to Sandford by the mischief that had been done, learned their names, and was disposed to "pull them up" before the Vice-chancellor, but he fortunately called on Rattlebones before he did so, from whom he received a present of a new coat and a dozen of port wine, which not only pacified him, but made him wish for such a piece of luck every night of his life.

## CHAPTER XVII.

"PETER," inquired Mrs. P., "*avey voo præ voter party?*"

"Ha, water party," cried Dusterly; "whose ha going to give hit! His hit hat Nuneham!"

"Deary me," continued my wife, throwing a mingled look of pity and contempt into her interesting countenance, "Mr. Dusterly, your *pare* and *mare* were shockingly *neglijay* in idicating of you."

"What his she harter?" inquired Dusterly, looking to me for information.

"Oh, she's merely at her old tricks," I replied, "pretending to talk French. She means to say, that your parents ought to have gone to a little unnecessary expense in your schooling—that's all."

"But why does she call my father a *pear*, hi should like to harx er? My mother hused to call him ha hold *crab*, hi know, when 'e was hout ho' temper; and then to call er ha *mare*! *Hi* don't consider hit ha bit more complimentary than calling of er a feminine dog, that's what hi don't," said Dusterly, looking gimlets and brad-awls at my old woman.

"Don't be a fool, Dusterly," said Broome, "Mrs. Priggins means no offence. Come, marm, tell us in plain English, if you please, what you wish to know of my friend Peter."

"*Ong oon mo*, then," said Mrs. P., tartly, "I wish to know if he has made up his mind to have done with your long *fatty-gaing* story about that Mr. Nincompoop. I wish he was dead, buried, and registered, that's what I do—a stoopid feller!"

"Meaning me, marm?" I inquired with the irascibility of an author justly incensed at such a coarse bit of criticism. "You don't imagine I'm going to murder a right honourable, just to please you."

"Come, come," said Broome: "Peter, you forget yourself. I can assure you, marm, my story is nearly at an end, and I hope that assurance will satisfy you, and recall your smiles."

"O! *too sela a too tray beang*—but there he sits in the little garret, that he calls his study, scribbling all day long the stuff you cram 'him with overnight at that horrid Shirt and Shothbag; and if one goes to ask him a question on any *soojay*, he snaps at one like an angry *babbycon*."

"Ha what?" said Dusterly.

"A lap-dog, stoopid!" replied Mrs. P., closing upon him, and putting her nose within an inch of his face; "and I tell you what, Mr. Ignoramus, I look upon you as the worsor of the three. While *they're composing* their articles, as they call writing their stuff and *nonsense*, you sit by sotting and encouraging of them. And that

Mr. Rakestraw ought to have his licence taken away ; and if nobody else won't make it his duty to do it, I'll write to the Vice-Chancellor myself—*jay finny*."

Having thus concisely stated her opinions and determinations, Mrs. P. bounced out of the room, to explain to her friend Mrs. Chops, the barber's wife, who was waiting for her in the kitchen with some fresh-curled false fronts, the cause of the *petty tomplate* she must have heard in the *sallong à dinnay*.

I apologized to my friends, as I now do the readers of the *N. M. M.*, for this indiscreet exhibition of my wife's iracundity.

I must confess, however, that she had some little cause to be angry, for we had "kept it up" for more than a month, after midnight, at Mr. Rakestraw's respectable public, and done more than our "duty on spirits." But to the "conclusion of my tale," as the little pig said of his caudality, when it was bitten off and devoured in a lively gambol with one of his brothers or sisters.

Mr. Peregrine Tittleback having kept his master's term, went up to London, and used his best exertions to get into all the best clubs in succession ; but by some mysterious agency, for which he could never account, there was a "run upon the black" balls whenever and wherever he was balloted for. At last a new club was started, called "The Seedy Society," into which he gained admission by putting down his name amongst the first subscribers, who were to constitute the committee. There he lived from "sunny morn to dewy eve," and was allowed to be so great a nuisance by every body, as to gain for himself the sobriquet of the "Member for Borem." He never rested until he had found out the main trunk and collateral branches of the family of every gentleman who was ambitious of joining the Seedies ; and, as the candidates for admission were generally a "queer team," these minute investigations into family matters were not always agreeable. Nor did he confine his inquiries to the members of the club, but condescended to inquire into the domestic affairs of all the domestics. In the course of these inquiries he made two or three bold but unfortunate hits—*exempli gratia*—

"Waiter!" cried he, seeing a fresh man in green plushes. "New servant—eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"What's your name—eh?"

"John, sir, *here*; I was called William at the Albion, Robert at the Bedford, and Benjamin at the—"

"Well, never mind the aliases—what's your family title—eh?"

"Smith, sir."

"What, Smith with an *i*—eh?"

Now as the poor fellow had lost one of his optics by an accident, and was known amongst his brother teapots as "Jack with the

telescope eye," he considered this question as an intentional insult, and revenged it by slyly pouring the gravy down the back of Mr. Peregrine's coat, and squirting the bottled porter over his smalls as often as he could contrive to do so. *Encore*—

"Porter! any letters for me to-day?"

"No, sir."

"By the by, what's your name, porter—eh?"

"Barnaby Burke, sir."

"No relation to the great Burke, I suppose, that used to make such capital speeches—eh?"

"I have not that honour, sir."

"Burke—Burke—let me see—oh, I have it, the man that was hung for stifling people with sticking-plaster, treacle, burgundy pitch, or some such adhesive thing, for anatomical purposes—eh? Was he your brother?"

Barnaby uttered an indignant and loud "No," and from that day forth punished him for so offensive a supposition, by putting the worst hat in the club upon *his* peg, and exchanging his brown silk umbrella for a four-and-ninepenny green gingham.

Poor Peregrine, I regret to say, was shot in a duel in Battersea Fields, for asking Mr. Fitz-somebody Something in what church his mother was married, which was not "the correct thing." He was carried to the Red House, and expended his last breath in inquiring of the surgeon in attendance, whose name happened to be Cribb, whether he was any relation to the notorious boxer.

But to return to Oxford, to Nincompoop, and his intimates, Balamson and Rattlebones.

They pursued the course of killing time usually adopted by idle men, and got into and out of many scrapes and difficulties. Ninny's inattention to college duties was so glaring, that it certainly would have been visited by rustication, if not expulsion, had not the whole bench of bishops been in so rickety a state of health, as not to justify the Dean in offending his patron, Lord Wastepaper, by punishing his *protégé*.

It will readily be understood, that tandemizing, cricketizing, boatizing, *et omne quod exit in* izing, is not to be carried on without a considerable expenditure. Ninny's finances were often at a very low ebb, notwithstanding the liberal sum allowed him by his governor at Lady Skinnykin Frostyface's suggestion. He adopted a very simple but ingenious plan of procuring the supplies when the last remittance was expended. He called upon his tutor, Mr. Eugenius Eupheme, to write him out a list of a few books necessary for carrying out his system of a course of college reading. This list, which was sure to be a lengthy and expensive one, he enclosed in a letter to his governor, and begged him to send him *up a cheek* to cover the amount, as books were always ready money

articles. Lord Fuddlehead was fool enough to believe such a gross enormity, and to have additional book-shelves put up in his library, ready for the reception of the cart-loads of classics he anticipated would arrive in the principality after his son had read them all at Oxford.

As Ninny never bought one of these books, of course he could not read them unless he borrowed them, which never occurred to him as at all necessary. He contented himself with being crammed for his *smalls*—as the first examination, the responsions, is now called—having lost its former name of “little-go.” He found a man to *coach* him who suited him exactly, as he did all his reading for him, by construing and parsing every line, and supplied him with a *memoria technica*, by converting the names of all the most respectable heroes of antiquity into some less euphonious modern titles. Thus, *iratus Achilles* was transmogrified into *Mr. Highrate-us O’Kill-us*. The crafty *Ulysses* was designated as *Polley-meet-us and dust-us*. *Dux ille Trojanus* was known as *Pye-house-come-knead-us*; and thus every one of the *dramatis personæ* in the “Æneid” and “Iliad” was furnished, like a modern pickpocket, with a convenient *alias*, whether he held the rank of general or captain, sergeant or corporal. The speeches, too, which Homer tells us his heroes found time, amidst the din of battle, to make to each other, before they had a set-to in single combat, were fully impressed upon the pupil’s minds, by being translated into the slang of Josh. Hudson and Jack Scroggins. The odes of Horace and Anacreon were set to the music of “All round my hat”—“If I had donkey,” and other popular tunes; to which any gentleman, who is melodiously given, and likes to try the experiment, will find some of them go remarkably well.

This ingenious innovation upon the old system of cramming gave great offence to the public tutors, who did all they could to prevent their men from resorting to the services of Mr. Exlex, for such was this inventive genius’s real name, though he was familiarly called *Legs* by his pupils. The Slow-coaches, however, and the Desperates, who had no chance of getting through their examinations by the regular methods, did not hesitate risking the displeasure of the college authorities, by engaging a seat in Legs’s coach, to ensure a safe journey through the schools. His coach, as he said, carried twelve passengers daily, but, as no one could stand cramming for twelve hours in succession, he took them by teams—four-in-hand—every hour from nine till twelve, by which means he economized time and talk. He worked at lower fares than other “coaches,” but he always took his money before he started, and never mounted his box before he was booked full.

Ninny, Balamson, and Rattlebones, who were all going up for their *smalls*, were, therefore, forced to look out for a fourth pas-



senger to take the vacant seat in the ten o'clock coach. This was soon accomplished in the person of Mr. Democritus Drinkwater, a gentleman-commoner of Christ Church, who had been plucked twice, more from nervousness and timidity than want of brains or scholarship. He was the eldest son and heir to a man who had risen from under the counter of a mercer's shop, where he slept every night, first to his young mistress's bed-room and a junior partnership in the concern; and, at last, upon the governor's death, to the whole of a very lucrative business. In a few years, by successful and large speculations in Osnaburghs and printed calicoes, he realized a large fortune. He was made—or rather his money made him—a common-councilman, then alderman, sheriff, lord mayor, and lastly M. P. for the city of London. In the House he was too wise a man to open his mouth, except to say "How do you do?" to his colleague, or eat his chop at Bellamy's. He was, consequently, considered a very clever man, and a very useful member.

Democritus, in furtherance of the views of his ambitious governor, who was weak enough to think that his money would ensure his son the mastership of the Rolls, or the vice-chancellorship at least, was sent to Eton to be prepared for the bar. There, when the source of his father's wealth was discovered, he was christened "Dimity," and nearly bullied to death by his patrician playmates. His career was any thing but a pleasant or successful one. He never made his appearance without being pestered about the price of cottons or Irish linens, or being recommended to ask his governor to apply for the situation of "President of the Board of Trade!" Being naturally of a timid and shy disposition, he had not nerve enough to put a stop to this system of bullying by laughing at it, or thrashing his tormentors; nor had he courage enough to display the talents of which he really was possessed.

When he left Eton, which he did without any

"Feelings of regret,"

he tried all he could to induce his father to allow him to enter the business, or some quiet little college or hall at Oxford as a commoner.

Neither of these arrangements accorded with the ideas of the wealthy citizen, and he insisted on his going to Christ Church as a gentleman commoner. He found himself much more comfortable in this exalted situation than he had anticipated. His gentlemanly and quiet demeanour caused him to be highly respected by the tutors and by the reading men, with whom he principally associated.

After reading steadily for six terms, he went up for his responsions, and stammered through his *viva-voce* examination so nervously as to convince the masters of the schools that he had

not read his books. He was plucked in consequence. A second attempt met with the same ill-luck. As his father insisted on his making one more trial, and as he began to doubt the utility of reading his books again upon the regular plan, he listened to the advice of Balamson, and took the vacant seat in Mr. Legs's ten o'clock coach.

Mr. Legs did not require his pupils to attend at his rooms, but kindly waited upon them in their own. Many reasons might be assigned for this unusual way of proceeding; but the most powerful was the fact of its being unsafe for him to open his oak to all morning callers. Though he made a great deal of money by private coaching, his habits were expensive, and his duns troublesome. Another was, he never lectured without a pot of porter in the pewter by his side, and, as he emptied several in the course of the hour, it was much more seemly to have them put down in another man's battels than his own. It was not from meanness or stinginess that he adopted this plan, for he was liberal in the extreme, but really from a desire to conceal his love of brown stout, and his astonishing capabilities as a consumer of it, from the eyes of the Manciple and Bursar.

If the reader wishes to have an idea how Mr. Legs lectured, he will have the goodness to accompany me to Balamson's rooms in Peckwater, on the morning before the day he was to go into the schools.

The time is ten o'clock, and breakfast, which has been rather an elaborate meal, is just over. In the centre of the room is the breakfast-table, on which may be seen the remnants of stewed kidneys, underdone beefsteaks, cold ham, eggshells, Wytham strawberries, commonses of bread, twists, rolls, and brown Georges; a teapot with the nob knocked off, a large black coffee-pot, and three quart silver tankards, which have contained pale ale and brown stout; a lot of sugar in a whity-brown bag, but no sugar-tongs, they being an article of plate that is never seen in a man's rooms after his first term—though what becomes of them all nobody can tell.

The owner of the rooms may be seen lounging on the sofa, dressed in a sort of grey Witney cloth reading-gown, a garment which was much in vogue in the days of which I am writing. He is industriously "getting up" and abusing Aldrich's Logic, and caressing an exceedingly ugly but perfect Highland terrier, which is flying at the boot-toe of Rattlebones, who occupies the other end of the sofa, and provokes Philibegs, between the chapters of Xenophon's Anabasis, by kicking him on the nose. Ninny is buried in a reading-chair, inspecting his betting-book, to see what he wins in case he should not be plucked. The odds are five to one against him, and no takers but himself among the juniors, while

the seniors consider his failure "poundage." Democritus is sitting on the seat near an open window, in order that the breezes may check the violent perspiration into which the thoughts of his examination invariably throw him.

Great Tom strikes ten o'clock, and, in less than five minutes, which have been occupied in walking from his nine o'clock team, Mr. Legs gives a mysterious but well-known tap at the door, and, without waiting for "come in," enters the room.

After noticing his pupils by a circular sort of nod, but without speaking, he seizes the nearest tankard. Finding it empty, he examines the other two, and closes the lid of the last with a disgusting look at finding himself balked of his expected draught. He then advances to the open window, and shouts out loudly for Broome, who, knowing what is wanted, hurries to the buttery, brings a two-quart cup of porter, and places it on the lecture-table, with a pewter-pot by its side. Mr. Legs fills the pewter, taking care to hold the jug high enough above it to make the liquor froth up, and then blows the top off, as hackneycoachmen and coalheavers are wont to do, and takes a draught nearly

"As deep as the rolling Zayder Zee,"

He then sits down and thrusts his long calfless legs, encased in white cord-shorts and long drab kerseymere gaiters, under "the mahogany," and, placing his white beaver by his side on the ground, exclaims—

"Now, my kiveys, shy up your castors, tie your bird's-eye wipes to the stakes, and go to work."

This classical allusion to the commencement of a prize-fight (for Legs was so fond of pugilistics that he offered to edit and correct the proofs of "Boxiana" for nothing) elicits an exclamation of "No go, old fellow, we ain't in sufficient training yet," from his three noble pupils, and a nervous negative shake of the head from Mr. Drinkwater, who perspires too much to speak.

"What, not up to your work, eh? bellows to mend still? Well, here's one more pull at the 'whipcord,' and then to show you how to go in and win," replies Legs, finishing the residue of the porter, and winking at Broome for a "relay."

"Now let's get ready to start the logic coach first; and as there's only three in the team, I must put you along unicorn fashion. Ninny, old fellow, as you don't run in this coach, you may employ yourself in crib-biting, or moistening your mouth ready for a stage in the four-horse Horace mail."

Ninny did make an attempt to take up logic, but dropped it at the very commencement; for being told there were three *operations of the mind*, it put him so much in mind of *physic*, which was the

only thing to which he had heard the word operate applied, that he nauseated the *ars instrumentalis*, and took to Euclid instead.

While, therefore, Mr. Legs was lecturing on logic, he amused himself and annoyed his friends by trying to play "Polly, put the kettle on," upon the keyed bugle; but, finding it too difficult, exchanged it for "In my cottage," a much easier air, of which he could play the first three bars very much out of tune.

But for a specimen of Legs's mode of lecturing :

"Well, my pals, where did we pull up last journey?"

"At syllogisms," replied Rattlebones.

"All right! so we did. Well, a syllogism is this sort of a concern—

"All prizefighters are regular bricks,  
Josh. Hudson is a prizefighter—"

*Ergo*, which means therefore,

'Josh. is a regular brick.'

You won't forget that?

"Now, you see the two first propositions are called premises—you know what premises are? No! Why Costar's stables are his 'premises'—you won't forget that? Well, the first is called the major—Major Smith, you know, who 'posted the tin' for Peter Crawley—you won't forget that? and the other is called the minor. A minor, you know, is a little kivey that ain't of age to touch the dibs—you won't forget that? The last is called the conclusion, the end of the fight, when one of the men can't come to time—you won't forget that?"

Mr. Legs took a little more "whipcord," and handed the pewter round to his class. He then continued his lecture much in the same style, until he had run through the third part of Aldrich, which he did in twenty minutes exactly.

He then commenced his lecture on the Greek books, and, as he shone in giving a liberal translation of a battle, I will give one specimen of his method. Any gentleman who has not forgotten his classics, and likes to refer to the original passage, will find it in the 7th book of the *Iliad*, line 244 :

"Ἡ ῥῆ, καὶ ἀμπικαλὸν, κ. τ. λ."

"He chaffed indeed, and, shaking his stick, whirled it at Ajax (we'll call him Jack, for short—you won't forget that?), but merely hit his carcass-guarder, which was kivered over with the cracklings of seven masculine cudchewers, and formed of eight tin plates; the oaken plant cut slap through six hides, but was jammed like Jackson in No. 7. Next, that son-of-a-heathen-deity, Jack, let fly his walking-stick and hit Priam's cock chickabiddy on his pot-lid; the

well-seasoned ash went clean through his figured waistcoat, and would have given him a belly-go-fuster, but he bobbed and diddled black Death."

After the Greek was "polished off," in another twenty minutes, and the "whipcord" had been again passed round, the Latin lecture commenced, and the well-known boat-race of Virgil, lib. v., 139, was thus rendered :—

"They sit down upon the thwarts, hold up their oars, and keep a sharp look-out for the signal; their hearts go pitapat from expecting no end of *νύξας*. As soon as the trumpeter blows his tin, they stand for no repairs, but away they go. Hurrah! from all hands. In go the oars, and the water hisses round the bows—the Derby pace is nothing to theirs—the men on the banks cheer them on, amidst loud cries of 'Go it, my tulips.' Gyas (we'll call him Guy—you won't forget that?) shoots ahead with Cloanthus (we'll call him 'old Clo', as the Jews say—you won't forget that?), closes on his counter, the better oar of the two, but pulling a heavier skiff. The *Pristis* (very like a whale, you know) and the *Centaur* (part man, part horse, you know—think of a pot of half-and-half, and you won't forget that) come up bow-and-bow just behind them. The barge—the goal—is in view, Guy leading; when old Clo' tries the artful dodge, cuts off a point, and gets ahead. Guy begins abusing his cox'en for not keeping closer in-shore, and, the moment he sees old Clo' ahead of him, hits his steerer a cut on the head and knocks him into the river—he swims to shore, and in course all the men on the bank laugh at him and his dripping toggery. 'Hurrah! go it! well pulled!' The rowers begin to blow—their mouths feel as dry as a dust-heap, and the sweat runs down their noses. One, from steering too close in-shore, runs aground, and hits it up as a bad business. On they go! the race is between Guy and old Clo', but the latter being in best wind eventually wins, and, amidst the shouts of the men on the barge, hoists his colours to the head of the flag-staff, and sacks the tin."

Tom strikes eleven. Mr. Legs finishes his lecture and the porter, make his nod circumbendingly, and hurries off to work his last team.

This unprofessional method of conveying instruction will doubtless appear extraordinary, and rather vulgar to most people; but I can assure them it was very successful, and got many men through the schools who were considered "dead plucks" by their friends and tutors.

The truth of this assertion was proved in the case of Balamson and Drinkwater, who were up on the same day, and, though it certainly was a "shave," got their testamurs, and tipped Dodd his "five bob" with great pleasure. Drinkwater's success—for, as I have explained already, his nervousness and timidity had caused

his previous failures—may be attributed to Mr. Legs having made him breakfast on warm calf's feet jelly, into which two glasses of curaçoa and a little champagne brandy had been stirred. Legs makes a point of breakfasting with his men—or horses as he calls them—on the morning they go into the schools, in order that he may give them their “drench” and secure himself and them a final *cram*.

As Ninny thought himself quite equal, if not superior, to Balamson and Drinkwater in scholarship, he made sure of passing, and took the odds against himself to a much greater amount than he had ventured to do before the success of his friends was made certain. He “stood to win” enough to cover all his ticks, and they amounted to a considerable sum. If he lost, a fresh list of books from Mr. Eupheme, and a check for the amount of them from his gullible governor, would easily be obtained to meet the demands upon him.

His mind being perfectly comfortable on money matters, he set-to with his tiger, Higgins, with great success, the day before his examination, to get himself into good wind for a set-to with the examiners. Just as he was in the midst of a very spirited “rally,” and was giving poor Higgins “pepper” up in a corner into which he had driven him, Broome entered with a message from Mr. Eupheme, who wished to see him immediately. Having knocked Higgins down as a *finale* to the set-to, he put on his clothes and his academics, in order to be *prout statuta requirunt*, and hastened to his tutor's rooms.

Mr. Eupheme, who had been *sitting* for six hours, searching every authority he could think of for the exact English of several Greek particles, such as *ἀς, ἀρα, μιν, γι, δη*, which were crammed into one line of Homer, was refreshing himself by *standing* to complete the investigation at a high desk, and rejoicing in a change of attitude which rendered him “good” for another six hours' search. He had made the ingenious discovery, that standing upon one leg at a time rested the other, by watching the ducks in Christ-Church meadow out of his bed-room window while he was shaving.

Mr. Eupheme, the reader will be pleased to remember, was mild in his manners and mystifying in his discourse; being, moreover, exceedingly particular in his quantities.

“Good morning, Mr. Nincompoop,” he said to Augustus; “I have summoned you to ascertain, by a superficial inquisition, the probabilities of your satisfying the masters of the schools to-morrow. But I entreat your pardon—remain not perpendicular, but relieve your crural members and the spinosity of your vertebræ, by reposing your corpusculum upon a chair or cubiculum.”

Ninny did not exactly understand this request; but as Mr. Eu-

pheme took a chair himself, he thought it too good an example not to be followed.

Mr. Eupheme continued,—“You are fully apprized, I opine, of the nature and objects of this first examination, which is correctly designated ‘responding,’ inasmuch as the candidates for the *epitogium generalis sophistæ* are required to answer or respond to certain grammatical, syntactical and prosodical questions which the examiners in their wisdom may think it requisite to put to them.”

“Why, yes!” said Ninny, who saw that his tutor expected a confirmation of his opinion, “I sat in the schools, but although I picked a saint’s day, and went in at half-price, it was so very slow, I believe I went to sleep.”

“Then,” said Mr. Eupheme, smiling benevolently, “the papperous influences of Somnus or Morpheus deprived you of the advantage of ascertaining the *modus operandi* used in conducting an examination.”

“Oh! I heard one man—rather a spoon than not—plucked for not answering his entomology,” said Ninny, bungling a little on the last word.

“Pray pardon me, my honourable young friend,” said Mr. Eupheme, looking a little shocked; “but you mean *etymology*—from *ἔτυμολογία quod ab ἔτυμος verus et λόγος verbum*. Now entomology—*ab ἔντομα insecta et λόγος verbum*, treats of the nature and habits of those minute created animalities which are commonly called insects, *ab in* into, and *seco* to cut. You probably have not studied their properties and propensities?”

“Why, sir,” said Ninny, not liking to confess his ignorance, “I—I—was once bitten by a bug, and I understand they have a propensity for occupying old properties in the shape of bed-steads, drawers, and hair-trunks.”

“Right, very right, sir—for so small an animal their powers of dentition and idention are very great, and a remedy for the irritamentality caused by their bite upon the epidermis has long been a desideratum among the eruditest pathologists.”

“There can’t be a doubt about it,” said Ninny, twiddling and spinning his watch-key, and not knowing what to say.

“I regret to learn, Mr. Nincompoop,” resumed Mr. Eupheme, “that you have had recourse to the hired services of Mr. Exlex—his exuberant employment of metaphors, which the vulgar call slang, operates detrimentally in the perfectibility of his pupils in the ‘urbanities.’”

“He’s a capital crammer, though,” said Ninny, “and wraps up a great deal in a small parcel, like William, at the Star, who can pack a quart of wine into a pint decanter.”

“An ingenious *δουλος*,” exclaimed Mr. Eupheme, astonished at

the compressible powers of William the Waiter. "But to the object of our present colloquy. I wish to ascertain your abilities in Latinity. There are materials for explaining your ideas in writing on that table. Sit down, and compose a theme or a copy of verses—hexameter acatalectics—on any subject you please to select. I am going to perambulate constitutionally for two hours, and will lock you in my rooms until my return, lest your composition should not be original. You will not need a dictionary, as it is not verbosity, but construction that is regarded in our schools. For the present—*vale!*"

After saying this, Mr. Eupheme did as the Druids do on festive occasions—"sporting his oak," and left the astonished Ninny to do what he had never done before—an exercise for himself.

He drew the paper towards him, and a great variety of horses' heads and dogs' heads upon the paper. Then he mended his pen, and walked up and down the room, examining the ceiling very accurately, as if he expected to see a subject or a copy of verses upon the plastering; then he looked out of window, intending to send a note to Legs, or the barber, to tell them to do something for him, and drop it into the letter-box; but there was not a man in *quad* (I don't mean in prison), and all the scouts were gone out of college. He returned to the table again, and began to try a theme on the most hackneyed school-subjects, but it would not do. Then, as he had been used to doing doggerel verses twice a week at Rotherwick, or rather to read them over after they were done for him, he resolved to try his hand at them. As the subject was left to himself, he chose one, and having headed it

**"LUDI BULLINGDONIENSES,"**

he took some unwarrantable liberties with the Latin language, and treated it thus :

"Ah! me! quam durum est sine Gradû scribere versus!  
 Sed precor, O musæ, quæ nine o' you live up on high there,  
 Mittite opem misero, qui 'gainst his will's made a poeta,  
 Illos dum celebros, qui cunctos in batting and bowling  
 Exsuperant, necnon over hurdles jumpere gaudent.  
 Amplius haud foxhounds nemorosus montibus errant,  
 Nec canis in vacuo leporem petit, aut in a hedge-row.  
 Nostri venatores sunt omnes blister'd and turn'd out,  
 Coccineæque togæ servis donantur equinis.  
 Non summis ocreis aptatur calceus acer,  
 Pendet inutiliter clavo flagellus, et omnes  
 Nunc vittas remonent, quæ tied their hats to their coat-collars.  
 Quisque 'quid est factu?' quærit nondum-graduatus.  
 'Vernum tempus adest,' ait unus, 'let's have a ride up  
 Ad Bullingdon viridem, Cowleyiive paludem.'  
 Dissentit nemo; sed mittit his scout to a hackman  
 Quisque later regularis. Equi qui gallop by instinct



Tunc adstant foribus, genibusque et corde tremantes.  
 Nil mirum ! nam sunt fracti ventosi from hard work  
 Atque carent *fint fle*, ebriosos quod facit illos.  
 Ascendunt omnes, showing off as they ride down the high street.  
 Cumque ad turnpikum veniunt, pecunia deest,  
 Et Dominus Harpur homines non trustere solet ;  
 Promittunt omnes alio die solvere toll-man,  
 Sed, nictans oculis, ille loudly pronounces it ' no go'  
 Et portam claudit, clavemque pockettibus abdit.  
 Tunc revocat passus unus to borrow a shilling  
 ( Consumunt alii tempus in abusing the pikeman ).  
 Porta patet, solido soluto. ' Go it, ye cripples !'  
 Vociferant, ' Tally-ho ! yoicks ! forward !' and all sorts o' noises.  
 Quisque tenet sedem—luto limoque repleta  
 Heu ! cum fossa patet, two or three of 'em tumble in headlong ;  
 Tunc alii rident et equi scamper off round the common.  
 Apparent, cratibus clausis, ovilia longè—  
 Vociferant, ' Hurrah ! Age tunc habeamus alaudam.  
 Insiliunt, tunc exsiliunt—quod frightens the baa-lambs.  
 Sed cito pastor adest : furcâ baculoque minatur  
 Illos : diffugiunt rapidè. Tentoria velis  
 Candidulis adstant, homines ubi gooseberry champagne,  
 Porter, ale, et cider potant when heated at cricket.  
 Hospes stat portâ, roseo spectabilis ore,  
 Et quærit ' what d' ye want ?' then *pop* go the bottles of champagne.  
 Tunc baculo et pilâ ludunt for two or three horas.  
 Artus sudor habet ; vini falsique doloris  
 Consumunt calathos multos, et get rather swipy,  
 Solvere non meditantur, Equi portantur ; et omnes  
 Ascendunt, nam dinner adest. Sic rursus ad Oxford ! "

When Ninny had completed this elegant copy of verses, Tom struck five, and Broome came in to tell Mr. Eupheme that the hall-bell was ringing for dinner. Ninny gave him the verses, and hurried to his rooms to dress.

In the meanwhile, Broome was much surprised that Mr. Eupheme was absent, as he seldom missed dining in hall. Upon making inquiries for him at Tom and Canterbury gates, the porters could give no account of him. Dinner passed, the port was consumed in the common-room, coffee discussed, and the dons retired for the night, without any news of Mr. Eupheme.

Broome became alarmed, and made himself a large jug of gin-punch, being determined to sit up all night for him. Knowing that his master was often guilty of mental absenteeism, he imagined it was possible he might have walked into the Cherwell or Isis, and been drowned, or into a gravel-pit, and broken his neck.

Tom tolled the "midnight hour," and Broome replenished his jug. He then arranged in his mind all the necessary preliminaries for a coroner's inquest, and made imaginary preparations for a mournful funeral in the cathedral, when, just as he was seeing the coffin lowered into the vault, the well-known creak of his master's

shoes was heard on the stairs. He sprung from his chair, hid the gin-punch in the coal-hole, and opened the oak, which he had sported from fear of ghosts.

Mr. Eupheme, it appeared, had strolled down the High Street, intending to take a constitutional up Headington Hill ; but seeing a coach just starting for London, resolved to have a shilling ride to Sandford, and walk back along the banks of Governor Isis. Upon the coach, and by his side, was a melancholy-looking German, who had been to lionize the University. With him Mr. Eupheme speedily got involved in a deep discussion upon metaphysics, and so earnestly was he engaged in trying to convince his new acquaintance that all his opinions and arguments were founded on "erroneosity," that he forgot to tell the coachman to pull up at Sandford, and did not recollect where he was, until the coach stopped to dine at the now-nearly-ruined-by-the-railway town of Henley-on-Thames. Hence he returned by the first coach ; and as the night was rather frosty, and he had no great-coat, he caught a violent cold, and was forced to lie in bed all the next day. This unfortunate occurrence prevented his seeing Ninny's verses, until it was too late to prevent his going up for his examination.

Mr. Legs of course breakfasted with Ninny before he went into the schools, and administered his favourite drench of calf's-foot jelly and curaçoa—he considered it quite as good as three penn'orth of old beans to a horse, when an unusually hard journey is before him.

Ninny was in excellent spirits, and confident of winning his testamur and his bets. He therefore made a very hearty breakfast of devilled kidneys and brown stout before he took his draught. He then put on a white tie, and his cap and gown, and went to a shop to purchase those ridiculous things called bands, which the statutes still require men to wear in the schools. Of course he purchased the smallest pair that could be obtained, and stuffed them under his tie, that they might not be seen.

He laughed and talked merrily enough as he walked along the streets ; but when he got into the schools' quad, the atmosphere of the place, or the pallid faces of the men who were going up with him, and were walking about waiting for the doors to be opened, made him feel less confident of success. When the masters of the schools appeared, looking rather sulky and disgusted with the task before them, he began to feel in a funk. He tried to disguise it by talking and laughing loudly with his friends, and was not sorry when the doors were opened, and he was enabled to escape their observation.

He had almost reached the table, when he ran back again and called to Legs, who was going up the stairs leading to the gallery, in order to hear his examination :—

"I say, Legs, old fellow, just tell me, for fear they should ask me—was Xenophon a Grecian or a Roman?"

"A Grecian," said Legs; "think of the Grecian coffee-house in London, and you won't forget that."

Ninny locked up the information in the store-closet of his memory, and hurried up to the table.

The names were called over, and, as his was the first on the list, he was requested to take up his *Anabasis*, turn to a certain passage, and begin.

Now the gentleman who began to examine him happened to be a man of no abilities or scholarship whatever. He had been injudiciously appointed to the situation from friendly motives, by one of the proctors of the year. The men used to laugh at him and bully him in the schools, by making the most absurd mistakes, on purpose to see if he could detect them. When he found this out, which he did in a very few days, he "read up" overnight, by the aid of *Cribs* and *Clavis's*, some of the most difficult passages in the books which the men took up, and did his best to pluck his tormentors.

The other gentleman was a very clever man, and exceedingly good-tempered, but he took a good many private pupils, and, as time was very valuable to him, he never gave a fumbler a second passage, but floored him at once, and went on to the next man, in order to get the business over as quickly as possible that he might go to his pupils.

"Now, Mr. Nincompoop," said Mr. Heavyhead, "will you begin?"

Ninny coughed thrice, and pulled his gown up on his shoulder. He then *read* the passage very fluently, long words and all; but when he began to construe, his fluency deserted him, and after bungling through the little words, came to a dead stand-still at the first long one.

"Well, sir," said Mr. Heavyhead; "go on."

After waiting for a little while, Ninny, to break the dead silence which was alarming, made a shot, and went so near the mark, that Mr. Heavyhead, not being certain about the word himself, nodded his head and allowed him to proceed.

He contrived to bungle through the construing somehow, but when the grammatical part of the examination commenced, he made so many egregious blunders, that even Mr. Heavyhead was convinced he was a much worse scholar than himself. He therefore looked surprised at such gross ignorance, and throwing down his book, asked Mr. Swift, his brother examiner, if he would try him with a few questions.

Mr. Swift pulled out his watch, and replied,

"Oh dear! no—it's a quarter past ten already—give him a few questions on paper, and if he can't answer them, turn him out."

Mr. Heavyhead acted as he was ordered : and Ninny, after looking over the paper, and finding he could not answer one of the questions, thought of bolting, and giving up all chance of passing for that time. He recollected, however, that some men, situated like himself, had managed to get their papers done for them. He therefore copied out the questions, and as he sat at the end of the table nearest the gallery, screwed the paper up like a small ball, and winking at Legs, jerked it at him under his arm. The paper unluckily fell short, and rolled along the ground close to the feet of Mr. Heavyhead.

He picked it up, and immediately saw through the meaning of this duplicate copy of his own questions.

The reader will not be so surprised at his sharpness on this occasion, when I tell him that he, Mr. Heavyhead, was strongly suspected of having got his degree by the same means.

After whispering a few words to Mr. Swift, who looked at his watch, and said,

"Oh yes—by all means—it's half-past ten," he called Ninny up to the table, and began a long and serious harangue upon the impropriety of his conduct.

Mr. Swift interrupted him by saying, "There, that will do—cut it short—it only wants five-and-twenty minutes to eleven : Mr. Nincompoop, we can't go on with your examination—you must leave the schools. Next gentleman come up as soon as possible."

Ninny looked up to the gallery and smiled lugubriously at his friends, who made a rush to the door to meet and condole with him.

"Never mind, old fellow," said Legs ; "linchpin came out, and let you down—eh?"

"Better luck another time," said Balamson.

"Bad throw, Ninny, for the best bowler on Bullingdon," said Rattlebones.

"Very unfortunate you couldn't recollect that second aorist," said Drinkwater, looking sympathetic.

"Oh! d—the second aorist!" replied Ninny; taking off his bands, and tearing them into fragments ; "I don't care a farthing about it, only I believe that excessive ass, Heavyhead, didn't know what tense it was himself. Let's go to the Vine, get some porter, and see the Age start."

"But I say, old fellow," said Balamson, "I'll trouble you for that 50*l*. I've won."

"And I for that 40*l*," said Rattlebones.

"All right," said Ninny : "I must give you an I O U, as I've got no tin. I must write home to the governor to-night."

The party, headed by Legs, who never neglected his porter when an opportunity offered of imbibing it, went over to the Vine, and did justice to Mr. Stevens's excellent tap.

"Never say die, old fellow," said Legs to Ninny, seeing him rather lower than usual in spirits. "You've had a fall, to be sure, but haven't broken your knees, only just rubbed the hair off. We must curb you up tighter next journey."

"Oh! I don't care about it, if you mean that," replied Ninny; "and if you'll all dine with me to-day, I'll go over to the Mitre, and order a spread at six o'clock."

A ready assent was given, and Dennis had "the office," as Legs said, to get a "regular spread."

As they had a long day before them, and nothing particular to do, their horses were ordered, and they started for Woodstock, to have a gallop round the beautiful park of Blenheim.

Rattlebones did very little mischief that day: he merely stole one of old Templeman's Blenheim puppies, that was fastened near the park gates to attract purchasers, and put it into a postboy's boot. To be sure he struck a large thistletop under a commercial's horse's tail, and set him kicking. He also removed the linchpins out of one yellow postchaise, which would be called out with the "first turn." Sam, the waiter, too, missed his corkscrew, but then he found it next morning screwed into the back of his master's best great coat, so that he did not lose it after all.

The keeper who rode round with them to show them the *crosscade* (as he will insist upon calling the waterfall), and the other objects worthy of being seen, was surprised to find, the next morning, that the chimney of Rochester's tower smoked so much that the fire could not be lighted. He found on examination, that the marquis had kindly put a large square stone, which formed part of the battlements, upon the chimney-pot, to prevent the little birds from tumbling down the flue.

After a very good and substantial luncheon at the Bear, with lots of bottled porter, they all returned to Oxford, where they found Mr. Legs, who had never left the Vine all day, very far gone, or, as he expressed it, "considerably consarned in liquor." At his own particular request he was put to bed at the Mitre, in order that he might sleep off the effects of the porter, and be ready to join them in the evening.

Need I say the dinner was excellent and the wines good? Nothing could be better, and they all did justice to it and them. It would be a waste of time to attempt to describe all that was said and done, the practical jokes that were played off, and the capital songs that were sung at this dinner-party. All Oxford parties are much the same, and in describing one, which I have done in "Mr. Singleton Slipslop's great-go party," I have described all.

Upon this occasion a great deal of wine was drunk, because the men, with the exception of Drinkwater, had capabilities of no ordinary kind. He, poor fellow, got very tipsy soon after dinner, and

made himself much worse than he would have been, by throwing red-hot halfpence out of window in a fire-shovel, for the little boys to scramble for.

This was done at the suggestion of the marquis, who was delighted at witnessing the agility the snobbiculi displayed when their fingers were severely burnt in picking up the coppers. Of course a large crowd was soon collected, who became "receivers-general" of oranges, cakes, nuts, and all sorts of missiles, from the Mitre windows. Then they began to retaliate, by flinging mud and stones at the enemy. Several panes of glass were smashed, and Dennis would have got his master to interfere if he had not been obliged to go to bed brandy-and-watery. As it was, he wisely sent Boots to the Marshal, and told him that the town were behaving exceedingly bad to the gown. The proctors—believing this of course—were quickly on the spot, and the mob was dispersed.

The proctors then proceeded up stairs, in order to take down the names of the gentlemen who, they doubted not, were the parties most to be blamed. They found, however, the room deserted, as Dennis had given notice of their approach in time for Ninny and his friends to make their escape by the back staircase.

When the proctors were gone—and they left the inn as soon as they found they could get no information out of Dennis as to the names of the gentlemen who dined in No. 5—they returned and sat down quietly to have a little rational recreation with the dice-box. They soon grew tired of it, however, and, after exchanging IOU's, agreed to have a fly, which was a luxury then recently introduced into Oxford from Cheltenham, and ride down to Sandford to see the boats start.

This proposition was readily acceded to, and in about five minutes the carriage was at the gate. Rattlebones expressed his determination to drive, to which no one objected but Drinkwater. He, poor fellow, had never been so tipsy before, and the wine made him irritable and quarrelsome. He declared he wouldn't go with them unless he was permitted to drive.

Every argument was used to induce him to get inside and sit quietly in the open carriage, but in vain—drive he would. At last an unwilling assent was given, upon the marquis promising to stand up behind him, and hold him on the box-seat by his coat-tails. Drinkwater, delighted at having gained his point, gave a loud cheer, and rushed up the narrow passage that led to the gate where the fly was standing. He snatched the whip and reins from the astonished driver, and attempted to climb up to the box-seat. He had nearly succeeded in gaining it, when his foot unfortunately slipped, and he fell back upon the curbstone. The other men, who were larking in the yard, arrived at the gate just in time to find the friend with whom they had been thoughtlessly revelling—a corpse.

The shock sobered them instantly. The body was carried into the Mitre, a surgeon sent for, and every thing done that his skill could suggest. The skull, however, was shockingly fractured, and the spine of the neck divided. His death must have been instantaneous.

The whole of the parties—who were sadder but better men ever after this dreadful affair—were rusticated, with the exception of Ninny. He, as the giver of the party, and a plucked little-go man, was mercilessly expelled by the Dean, Dr. Pertinax Plotter, who, by a strange coincidence, had that very morning received the following note from Lord Wastepaper :

“ My dear Dean,

“ We are *out*. I did the best to keep our party in—but unsuccessfully. I don’t care about it for *myself*, as I expected nothing from ministers. I am sorry for you, as the Bishop of Blank is at last dead and you haven’t the slightest chance of being his successor. I am sure, however, this little unpleasantry will not prevent your extending the usual indulgences to my young, but rather wild friend, Nincompoop.

“ Your’s, my dear Dean,

“ As ever,

“ WASTEPAPER.”

His lordship received the following answer by the next post :

“ The Dean of Christ Church presents his respectful compliments to the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Wastepaper, and begs to inform him that he has been under the unpleasant necessity of expelling the Honourable Augustus Noodledoodle Nincompoop.

“ Deanery, Christ Church,

“ June 25th.”

Ninny left Oxford, and shortly after, through the influence of Lord Wastepaper, whose party was *in* again in a few days, was appointed consul at the North Pole. Soon afterwards, as we have seen from the *Anti-present-state-of-things Gazette*, he succeeded his father, Lord Fuddlehead, as first lord of the scullery and clerk of the kitchen-range, the duties of which he discharged to the satisfaction of himself and his patrons.

Dr. Plotter died a Dean.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

"Hi'm very appy has hall that here's hover," said Dusterly, as I finished reading to him the MS. of "The School and College Career of the Honourable A. N. Nincompoop."

"*A maw osey*," said Mrs. P., nodding at Dusterly approvingly; "*a jay day raisons*."

"Then put hem hin ha puddin, marm," said Dusterly. "Capital heatin, plum-puddin, hain't hit, Broome?"

"I am sure I have good reason to be glad," continued my wife, contemptuously disregarding Dusterly's error; "for, independent of the horrid waste of time and *lickures* at the Shirt and Shothag, I confess *I* think the papers *tro gro*, and too full of slang to please or interest *les dam*."

"Why, has for *that*," said Dusterly, "hi don't recollect habove one hoath hin the ole consarn, and when a gentleman—let halone ha hobscore hindividual—his hin a passion, hit comes hout natural like."

"Mrs. P. alludes to the ladies," said I, "and I plead guilty to the charge of inserting much that may justly be termed *slang*—of the better sort, perhaps, inasmuch as it is University slang—but how can I avoid it! If I am to paint my characters to the life, I must observe the Horatian precept,

'*Descriptas servare vices*'—

for instance, if Mr. Euphenie

'*Proficit ampullas et sesquipedalia verba*,'

I must put such words into his mouth, or it is not the real Mr. Eupheme who speaks. If, again, an undergraduate, like Mr. Nincompoop,

'*Jura neget sibi nata, nihil non arroget armis*,'

I *must* make him take the law into his own hands, and thrash an offending townsman, instead of bringing him before the authorities.

—'*sibi convenientia finge*,'

says Flaccus, and I——"

"Let's ave hall that here hin Henglish, if you hain't no objection," said Dusterly.

"—am determined to follow his advice," I continued, "by letting all my characters speak in the way most natural and agreeable



to themselves. If there be any thing objectionable in it, let the blame lie on their shoulders, not on mine."

"Disactly," said Dusterly.

"But I really think," said Broome, "that, however amusing our last papers may prove to those gentlemen who cannot fail to appreciate the fidelity of our descriptions, the ladies, who form no inconsiderable portion of the readers of the *New Monthly*, would not be much entertained by them."

"*Jenny swee par pour oon*," said Mrs. P., "there's too much rigmarole Latin and Greek in 'em for me. A little pure Parisian, Peter, I think would be more acceptable to *les dam*."

"Ow horribly that woman does swear," said Dusterly.

"I confess," said I, "that, next to the consideration, '*hic liber MOERET Sotius*,' which is important to a man who has a sick wife, a large small family, and a much smaller income, my object in publishing my life and times was more particularly to amuse my old masters and other university gentlemen, by recalling to their minds those scenes of which each might truly say for himself

——' *pars magna fui*.'

If, however, I have inadvertently committed the grave offence—*delictum* immense of neglecting the ladies, I will endeavour to make the only atonement in my power, by writing a chapter for their especial entertainment.

I believe it is Addison who says, "We know the highest pleasure our minds are capable of enjoying with composure, when we read sublime thoughts communicated to us by men of great genius and eloquence." Now I beg to assure the feminine readers of the *N. M.M.* that, as I have neither genius nor eloquence, they must not expect to receive the "highest pleasure" from me. I shall endeavour to amuse them by recounting a simple but sad tale, and if I fail in exciting a sympathetic feeling with my heroine's griefs in their kind hearts, they must, in mercy, attribute it to a want of romance, which can scarcely be expected to reside in the breast of a bedmaker. I beg to assure them I have never undertaken the *pathetic line* for the "Minerva press," and have "no connexion with any other house" but the very excellent one of Mr. Colburn.

Having made these prefacial remarks, which I consider absolutely indispensable, I will give a plain and simple narration of

#### THE FATE OF AGNES FIELD.

IN the little village of Merton, within an hour's walk of Oxford, resided one Ephraim Field. He was a cripple, and much deformed in person. Being unfitted for hard labour in the field, which was the common occupation of the sons of the soil of Merton, he was

placed by his parents under the tuition of a tailor. The shopboard seemed to fit him, and he seemed born purposely to fit the shopboard. Being the only manufacturer of masculine indispensables in the village, he, of course, got all the custom of the place. Farmers, in those days, regarded the quantity rather than the quality of broadcloth, and, as Ephraim gave them plenty, both in longitude and latitude, they acquitted him of the crime of cabbaging, common to all tailors, and patronized him accordingly.

Ephraim, moreover, was exceedingly civil when he was sober, and, as he never got fuddled except on a Monday—which, I believe, is a red-letter day with the craft—the odds were six to one in favour of his customer's being treated with civility. When he was "in his cups," or, as he expressed it, when he "had his little hat on," no tailor, pugnacious as tailors naturally are, was more belligerent than he was. Over his ale he first became argumentative, then didactic, and, finally, abusive. He was wont to irritate his companions in the tap of the little public-house by treading on the tender part which every man has in his character. He would tax Giles with being a *porcher*—Robin with being caught in the fact of monopolizing all the eggs for his own use. Bob was accused of selling his master's corn, and Bill with deducting from the weight of the churned butter. These accusations being, somehow or other, partially founded on fact, produced a great deal of irritation in the parties against whom they were brought. When, however, they threatened to inflict corporal punishment on their accuser, these fine, manly specimens of the labouring classes were deterred from doing so by his saying,

"Ah! you cowards! lick a poor cripple—do."

This appeal to the sympathies of his fellow-men never failed in its effect, and the only punishment inflicted on him was turning him out of the alehouse. This, perhaps, was the severest that could be inflicted upon him, for he lost his beer and pipe, and the village-boys came regularly every Monday evening round the door of the public to see Ephraim turned out, and jeered and pelted him with all sorts of missiles to the door of his cottage; showing their delight by loud cheers at the impotent manifestations of revenge displayed by the poor cripple.

Ephraim had no one at home but a sister, almost as deformed as himself, to console him for the ill-usage he experienced on these occasions. He meditated on this, and resolved to have a wife. To the great surprise of the villagers he selected the prettiest girl in the place for the object of his addresses, and, to their greater surprise, carried off the prize against all the well-formed, strapping fellows, his rivals.

This is certainly one of the few anomalies in the nature of things, that I, Peter Priggins, could never account for, that the uglier and

more deformed a man is, the greater marital success he has with the fair sex. It may seem an extraordinary assertion to make, but it is a fact, that the four ugliest fellows I ever knew in my life married four wives each, every one of them with plenty of money for their marriage portion, and good looks in the bargain. Let any body else account for it—I cannot.

The fruits of this marriage were four fine children; the eldest was a boy, and with him more particularly my story has to do.

Ephraim, junior, was a well-formed, handsome lad, “favouring his mother,” as it is termed, more than his father. He displayed great talents in acquiring his A, B, C, but still greater in stitching broadcloths, and singing the popular tunes of his day. This talent was elicited by the man who dwelt in the next cottage, who was, by profession, a cobbler, or, as he was registered (for he was a freeholder), a cord-wainer—but, by trade, a fiddler.

Geoffrey Sewtlight—for such was his name—disregarded the apophthegm that “the cobbler should not go beyond his last.” He left his wife, whom he had instructed in his profession, and his journeyman, to look after the “heeling art,” and betook himself to fairs, races, and rustic hops, where he was a welcome visiter, and earned a great deal of money. He was carefull withal, and Mrs. Sewtlight always welcomed Geoffrey home, both because she loved him, and because he brought home the wherewithal to purchase her Sunday elegances in dress beyond the capabilities of her poorer neighbours.

Geoffrey was, however, too deep for his wife; for, knowing her taste for finery, and the waste to which such a taste leads, he concealed from her the real amount of his earnings. Her surprise, therefore, was very great when he told her that he intended to send their eldest son, Geoffrey, junior, to London, for the purpose of apprenticing him to a first-rate boot and shoe-maker, who required the enormous sum of 50*l.* for teaching the boy his business, and keeping him in eatables, drinkables, and sleepables for seven years.

Ambition is not confined to royalty. It is a vice—if such it be—shared by heroes, senators, and public orators, with the smallest artisans in this our sublunary world.

Ephraim Field, senior, was “struck all of a heap,” as his wife assured her friends, when he heard that Geoffrey Sewtlight was going to bind his son ’prentice in London. To think that he—the tailor of the village—should be obscured by the cobbler! and that cobbler a fiddler at fairs!

He neglected to keep St. Monday for six months, and worked harder than any one would have believed his little misshapen body could have allowed him to work. His wife, appreciating his motives for this unusual abstinence and exertion, aided and abetted him

in his task by presiding over the waistcoating department herself, and keeping Ephraim, junior, strictly to the gaitering and button-sewing-on part of the business—allowing him to practice psalmody over his work, by way of alleviating the severity of his task.

What was Ephraim senior's motive for thus neglecting the alehouse and adhering to the needle as faithfully as the needle adheres to the pole? Simply that he might save enough to enable him to put Ephraim, junior, 'prentice to a first-rate tailor in London, in order that he might eclipse his neighbour's son—Geoffrey Sewtlight, junior.

All his laudable efforts, however, did not suffice. Fiddling was more profitable than fitting out the outward man, and the raw material—catgut and horsehair—was not so expensive as broadcloth. Fiddling, moreover, was "ready money," while tailoring was cavalierly treated by long credit!

Ephraim was about to resume his old habits in despair, and had made up his mind to have a regular jollification at the alehouse with all his hard-earned savings, in spite of the exhortations and imprecations of his wiser better-half, when, fortunately for him and the family, the little church of Merton was vacated by the incumbent for a better living, and given to a gentleman who was remarkably fond of music.

The first Sunday he did the duty, Mr. Gamut was dreadfully shocked at the awful amalgamations of flat, sharp, and natural notes, which proceeded from the singing gallery, "accompanied" by a screeching clarionet and a grunting bassoon. He wisely considered that such a horrible din must be anything but an acceptable mode of offering up praise and thanksgiving, and resolutely determined to offend the singers, who thought—and do think—themselves of much greater importance than the parson, by introducing a hand-organ, and teaching the children of the village a series of plain tunes in which the congregation might join. Of course, the singers left the church; Mr. Gamut, however, was not to be deterred by such a rebellious proceeding. He persevered in teaching the school-children, and his efforts were rewarded by having a choir, which drew larger congregations than had ever been seen in Merton church before. "The singers," then, seeing their absence was totally uncared for, offered their services to sing seconds and basses, and even to accompany the hand-organ with their instruments; but this Mr. Gamut very properly and very positively declined.

Amongst the most promising pupils, indeed, the most promising of all was Ephraim Field, junior. He was possessed of a very clear and powerful voice. His ear was not only quick in catching and retaining tunes, but in detecting the slightest discords. Mr. Gamut, though he would gladly have kept him to lead his choir at Merton, nobly—for a noble act it was in so enthusiastic a musician—offered

to get him a chorister's place at New, Magdalen, or some other college. Old Ephraim would not consent to this. He had been in the habit of expressing his contempt for fiddlers in particular, and musicians in general, and was determined his son should be a tailor—a first-rate tailor, and nothing but a tailor.

Mr. Gamut, though disappointed at first, and displeased at having his liberal offer rejected, upon consideration, allowed that old Ephraim, like Hercules of old, had displayed great prudence in his "choice." Choristers, he knew, seldom or ever got anything in after-life beyond a paltry chaplaincy, with a small living attached to it; whereas he had heard of several tailors who had amassed large fortunes, ridden in their own carriages, and even had "Sir" prefixed to their names.

Mr. Gamut, therefore, very kindly lent old Ephraim 25*l.* to make up the sum which the first-rate tailor in London required for initiating young Ephraim into the mysteries of cutting-out and using the goose. He also strictly charged the boy to work hard at his trade, but by no means to neglect his music; holding out to him, as an inducement to persevere, the office of parish-clerk *in prospectu*.

Ephraim's first employment, after he was settled in his master's house, and had arranged his mattress under the counter, was to seek for his old neighbour and schoolfellow, Geoffrey Sewticht, who had been in London nearly six months. The meeting was mutually agreeable; and as their tastes were similar, their intimacy ripened into a warm and lasting friendship. They both worked very hard all day, and saved every shilling they gained by working over hours. The money thus accumulated was spent in attending the theatres, in the gallery of which they became notorious as the noisiest and severest critics, harmonic meetings at musical taverns and spouting clubs, or, as the members themselves call them, "debating societies."

I must not detain the reader by detailing all that occurred to them in the seven years of their apprenticeship. At the end of that period both of them had acquired such skill in their respective trades, that their masters offered them high wages to remain with them as journeymen. Both were so improved in music and singing, that they often earned a good dinner and a guinea by exerting their talents for the amusement of "great public meetings" at some of the great taverns. Both, too, were so much altered in personal appearance, that no one would have recognized in the two well-grown and well-dressed young men the little dirty tailor and cobbler boys that used to run half-ragged about the little village of Merton.

"Geoffrey," said Ephraim to his friend one Sunday, as they were taking their accustomed walk towards Hampstead Heath, "master has made me a very handsome offer to remain with him

as principal cutter-out, and has even hinted at a prospect of a partnership if I go on steadily and well."

"My master, too," replied Geoffrey, "has made me the same offer, only with a condition annexed to it, which renders it impossible for me to accept it."

"Indeed!" inquired Ephraim, "what may it be?"

"Why that I should take unto myself as a wife his disagreeable red-headed daughter. She has been showing her partiality to me for some time, by frequenting the shop more than usual, and bringing me, with her freckled fingers, the best cups of tea, and the thinnest pieces of bread and butter."

"Don't you like her, then?" asked Ephraim.

"You have never seen her," said Geoffrey, "or you would not ask such a question. Her head is exactly like a new-tiled house-roof, and her eyes resemble a ferret's. Then she sings,

'Oh, come to me, my love,'

a note and a half too sharp, all day long."

"Heugh!" said Ephraim, shuddering—his teeth being set on edge at the very notion. "Give her up, Geoff., there can be no harmony in a wedded life with a woman that sings out of tune."

"I have already resigned the partnership with her and her father, Ephraim, and, as I have saved a little money, I think of setting up in Oxford on my own account."

"It is curious enough that I should have been thinking of doing the same," said Ephraim; "and, as Mr. Gamut, to whom I have repaid the 25*l.* he lent my father to apprentice me, approves of the plan, and offers his assistance if any money is required. I shall go down at once."

"Then," said Geoffrey, "adieu to carrots and the co-partnership! I will go with you, and I'll tell you what we will do. We will take a small house in Oxford—Mr. Gamut will, doubtless, be responsible for the rent—and will club our little means to furnish a double shop, and a couple of bedrooms. We can get some old woman just to scour and clean up for us; neither of our trades requires any great stock."

"Agreed," said Ephraim, closing the bargain by giving Geoffrey a hearty shake of the hand. "Besides, we may get situations as singing-men in some of the quires, and with such an introduction and attention to our business we may get on pretty well with the University gentlemen."

"There's only one objection that I see," said Geoffrey, shaking his head.

"What's that?" inquired Ephraim.

"Why! we can't stand tick," said Geoffrey.

"True," said Ephraim; "but we will try our luck, and help one another along."

The two young men then went to "The Spaniards," and had their frugal pint of porter. They afterwards returned to London, and apprised their masters of their intentions. Each parted with his young man with regret, sincere wishes for his welfare, and a small present. Miss Carrots, we regret to say, tossed her red head in a very unbecoming manner, and refused to wish Geoffrey "good-bye;" at which he was not very much grieved.

On the following morning, at an early hour, having packed up their clothes and forwarded them by waggon, they set out to walk down home. They reached Merton on the second day, and presented themselves to the eyes of their astonished and delighted parents. On the Sunday following they surprised the natives and Mr. Gamut by singing an anthem in a way that had never been heard in Merton church before. The congregation were delighted with the performances of their young friends, and the reverend gentleman was so pleased, that after church was over he spent the whole evening in old Geoffrey's cottage in singing sacred music, and left them late at night, with a promise to assist them in their plans of setting up in business, and to obtain for them appointments in a college choir.

Mr. Gamut was as good as his word. In the course of the week following, in the window of a small house in Pennyfarthing Street, appeared two cards—one bore in large letters the words :

**EPHRAIM FIELD,**

TAILOR AND CAP AND GOWN MAKER,

FROM

LONDON.

The other was inscribed :

**GEOFFREY SEWTIGHT,**

BOOT AND SHOE MAKER,

FROM

LONDON.

Within might be seen, on one side, the sleeveboard, goose, and other paraphernalia of the tailoring department; and on the other, bradawls, wax-ends, lasts, and boot-trees, with other implements necessary for enabling gentlemen and ladies to walk in comfort and respectability.

In a short time afterwards, two of the singing-men of St. Mark's College, who were fond of sacrificing to the "God of Beer"—if there be such a Cerevisian deity—in returning from Sandford, where they had been pouring plentiful libations to their favourite divinity

down their own thirsty throats, fell into the lock-pool at Ifley, and, as neither could assist the other, were both drowned.

Their places, through the interest of Mr. Gamut, were filled by Ephraim and Geoffrey. The talents displayed by these young men soon introduced them to the lovers of music in the University and city, and their quiet and respectable demeanour gained them many friends and customers.

At the end of four or five years they had, by prudence and economy, laid up sufficient money to justify them in marrying. Ephraim had been for some time engaged to a respectable young woman, a governess in a family near Oxford, where his services in taking a part in private concerts had been often required. Geoffrey had also lost his heart to a buxom lass, the daughter of a farmer near Merton.

The house in Pennyfarthing Street was given up. Ephraim took a large and showy house in the High Street, and furnished it perhaps too handsomely; but his future bride had been used to handsome furniture, and he thought his means justified him in going to a little additional expense on her account. Geoffrey removed to a comfortable place in Broad Street, and was satisfied with fitting it up neatly but plainly for his "future," who knew nothing of the elegances, and cared only for the real comforts, of a home.

They were both married on the same day, in the church of their native village, by their friend and patron, Mr. Gamut, who composed and set to music an epithalamium, which was sung upon the joyful occasion by the gentlemen of the choir of St. Mark's. Their exertions were rewarded by a seat at the wedding-feast which had been prepared at Mr. Gamut's expense in a barn belonging to the newly-married Mrs. Sewtlight's father.

I must now narrate the events of many years in a very few sentences. Both our friends had prospered in business beyond their expectations. Mrs. Sewtlight was in the habit of presenting her husband with an additional branch to the family olive-tree every year regularly. Those Malthusian abettors, measles, small-pox, and hooping-cough had blighted and destroyed a few of the tenderest offshoots; but nine vigorous arms still remained attached to the parent trunk.

Mrs. Field, who was naturally weak and delicate in constitution, and had been rendered still more so by the sedentary nature of her early employments, gave birth to several sickly children, all of whom survived but a few days after their birth, with the exception of one—the eldest.

Agnes, as she was called, after her mother, was now about sixteen years of age. She was tall, but not too thin; and exceedingly graceful in her manner and deportment. Her face was one of those lovely ones that are seldom seen but on canvass; indeed, it closely



resembled the Magdalen's of Corregio. Her skin was so clear as to permit the blue veins to be seen distinctly under its surface. Her fair hair, which fell in natural tresses on her neck, was parted on her forehead, and confined there by a plain band of velvet. When perfectly quiescent, she might have been said to be too pale; but, upon the slightest excitement, either mental or bodily, a lovely colour pervaded her cheeks, resembling in its tints those faint but beautiful colours that are seen only in the landscapes of Claude Lorrain when the early sun is represented as just rising to bestow his brightness and his warmth upon the earth.

Upon this fair creature's education Mrs. Field had spared no pains. Her hours, by days and nights, were consumed in meditating plans for her benefit; being pure in heart and simple-minded herself, it is no wonder that her daughter resembled her in those qualities; being sincerely religious, without the outward affectation of superior piety, she instilled into her child's guileless bosom those seeds of religious veneration for the Christian religion which bade fair to ripen into the fruits of an incorruptible faith. Being also a woman of considerable classical acquirements, and thoroughly acquainted with the languages of the continent—a knowledge which she had gained by spending four or five years abroad with the family whom she first served as nursery governess—she was fully competent to instruct her child in those indispensable branches of knowledge—for such they are considered in these days of dear schools and cheap literature.

In one point, both mother and daughter closely resembled each other. They both entertained an enthusiastic passion for poetry and tales of fiction. The imaginary sorrows of fictitious heroes and heroines excited their sympathies far more forcibly than the real but unpoetic griefs of those who dwelt with and around them. They lived in a little world of their own creation. An indulgence in sedentary pursuits, and an unwillingness to go abroad and associate with those of their own grade of life, to whom from education and habits they were unsuited, produced a species of morbid sensibility, which rendered them unfit for the common duties of their station, and tended to weaken still more their far from healthy and vigorous constitutions.

In music, Agnes and her mother both excelled; but it was in the purest and chastest music of the schools of Italy and Germany; the simple and beautiful ballads of their own country were neglected, as not giving scope enough for that morbid sensibility to which I have before alluded. Ephraim, therefore, who was fond of a plain English, Scotch, or Irish melody, in vain attempted to instil a taste for his favourite airs into his daughter's breast. The consequence of this was, that, excepting for the simple but sublime strains of Handel, Haydn, and other composers of sacred music,

the father and child had no common love or interest, as far as their attachment to music went.

In Geoffrey's family, with whom alone Agnes and her mother associated familiarly, for "Old Lang Syne's" sake, the necessary business and occupations of real life produced very different results. Mrs. Sewtight was an uneducated—or rather one-sixteenth-educated woman—who looked upon a knowledge of housewifery, plain needlework, and plain cooking as the *summum bonum* of human acquirements. The female children, therefore, were sent to school, when they were old enough, for a year or two's instruction in writing, reading, and samplers, and then set to housework and stitchery at home.

The boys were also drilled in commercials, and bound to some useful trade as soon as they were old enough to wield the instruments of it. The eldest boy, Reuben—so named after Mr. Gamut, the founder of the family prosperity—was, at Ephraim's express request, placed under his care and brought up to his trade. He intended, as he had no son of his own, to leave his flourishing and profitable business to the son of his earliest friend.

Reuben and Agnes were not thrown so much together as two young persons, living under the same roof, might naturally be supposed to be. Excepting at meal-times, Mrs. Field and her daughter were rarely seen by the rest of the family; their hours were spent in the study of Agnes where books, music, and drawing, occupied their whole time.

Reuben looked upon both of them as beings of a superior order; and when joked about the "pretty Agnes," by the men and boys employed in the business, resented the bare mention of her name in conjunction with his own, in a manner that made them hesitate to repeat their witty observations. No intimacy, beyond sitting in the same pew, and reading out of the same prayer-book in St. Mary's church, and taking an evening's walk round Christ Church meadow on a Sunday, had taken place between them. To say that Reuben did not think Agnes very pretty, and too ladylike for him to dream of as a wife, and that Agnes did not think Reuben a fine, stout, superior young man for his situation, but without a spark of enthusiasm or poetry in his composition, would be false.

Each liked the other very well, but they had not seen enough of each other, nor had they any feelings in common to inspire them with sufficient passion or attachment for each other, to produce a bud of affection which might be cherished and ripened into love.

Geoffrey and Ephraim were not so very intimate as they had been; for when the former saw himself surrounded by so large a family of children dependant entirely upon himself for support, he gave up his situation as a singing-man at St. Mark's, and ceased to

assist at concerts and musical meetings. He found that his business required all his attention, and that music parties and bootmaking did not harmonize together. He therefore wisely resigned the more agreeable, to adhere to the more profitable occupation of the two. Ephraim, on the contrary, finding that his foreman carried on the business quite to the satisfaction of his customers, and knowing that his wife and daughter were not particularly anxious for his company in the study, increased the circle of his associates, and gave himself up entirely to the enjoyment of melody and the good things of this world.

Among the new companions of Ephraim, and to whom he had been introduced at a glee-club, which held its harmonic meetings at the houses of the members in succession, was one Mr. Humidus Boskey, a gentleman, by profession an apothecary, by practice a comic songster, and a frequenter of low public houses. The medical profession in Oxford is more rigidly kept to its legitimate uses than it is in other towns generally. The apothecary and accoucheur does not presume to intrude into the practice of the surgeon, nor has the surgeon bad taste enough to prescribe as a physician. Mr. Humidus Boskey, had he stuck to his business, as he ought, might have realized a handsome income by compounding and dispensing medicines, spreading plasters, and manipulating boluses and babbies; but he had a soul above rhubarb, and disdained the healthy but laborious occupation of pounding drugs in a mortar. He left such low and degrading pursuits to his assistant and half-starved apprentice; and on the nag that ought to have jogged from door to door, to enable him legally to charge for "medicines and attendance," he charged the imaginary foes of his country as a yeomanry-cavalry officer, and the fences of the farmers as a hunter of foxes and a courser of hares.

Mr. Humidus Boskey, moreover, was a shot, and kept a brace of pointers—on the victuals which his apprentice, who was to be treated as "one of the family," ought to have had—and a brace of spaniels for cover-shooting. He got permission to shoot over a great deal of unpreserved ground from the farmers, whom he attended—or rather professed to attend—by giving them a plain dinner and a hearty reception, and sending them home as intoxicated as himself on market days. Enormous were the powers of imbibition possessed by Mr. Humidus Boskey! Beer, wine, brandy, gin, punch, or toddy, it was all one to him—he drank and sung, then sung and drank again. He not only drank himself, but was the cause of drinking in others. His "Come, just one more glass, and I'll sing you a new comic song," was irresistible. The *pressé* invariably yielded to the "voice of the charmer," and resigned himself to melody, grog, and intoxication.

*It is a great misfortune to be able to sing a good song—especially*

a comic one—to any man who is not perfectly independent in his circumstances and unmarried, or paid for doing it professionally. His company is courted, and habits of jollifying and keeping late hours are engendered, which generally prove fatal to success in business and family comforts. Mrs. Boskey used to say that her husband was “an angel abroad, but a devil at home :” that he was the soul of harmony in the houses of other people ; but the moment he came into his own home, “hung up his fiddle behind the door,” and caused discords most inharmonious. Such metaphorical modes of describing the inattentions of company-loving husbands are, I believe, common to neglected wives of the class in which Mrs. Boskey ranked. It certainly was trying for her to know, that while she and her six children were forced to put up with short commons of breast-of-mutton pie for dinner, and untoasted single Gloucester for supper, her husband was revelling in “fish, soup, and hot joints every day,” and broiled bones and other devilries every night.

One little sketch of Mrs. Boskey’s nightly comforts—which I beg leave to state is no caricature—will give the reader an insight into the manner and character of her harmonious husband.

The clock has long since struck twelve. The children are all in bed, and the house is perfectly quiet. Silence is unbroken, except by the painful and monotonous tickings of the aforesaid clock, and a weak half-stifled cry from “the babby,” which, being put to bed with the trolloping maid of all-work, wakes up now and then, and misses its mother. The mother sighs when she hears the cry, but dares not go to her infant, lest her husband should come home in her absence, and be kept waiting at the door for a few minutes. She sits half asleep, with her feet on the kitchen fender, before a little bit of fire, not sufficient to afford warmth to any thing but the kettle which is placed upon it, to be kept hot for Mr. Boskey’s final tumbler of “bran’y-a-war’er,” as he pronounces it when tipsy. She is enveloped in a large cloak, and her arms are wrapped up in her apron, to ensure that warmth which the fire refuses to give her. On the little table by her side are several little dip-candle ends in a snuffer-tray, which she burns in succession by the help of the tin saveall which stands in the one brass candlestick. *The* book is also near her, in which she has been searching for consolation and hope in her bitterness, until the fatigues of the day have overcome her, and her eyes refuse to do their office.

She listens habitually to every step that passes, hoping it may be her husband’s. The door of the kitchen is left open, that the first sounds of his footsteps may reach her, and that she may not fail to hear the night-bell ring by which Mr. Boskey chooses to make his return known to her, in order that the neighbours may fancy he has been called up in the night to a patient. The sugar and the

bottle of brandy stand also ready for the manufacture of the glass of grog, which he facetiously designates as his "nightcap."

Slowly and lingeringly pass the minutes. Nature exhausted bids her seek repose, but she dares not. Slumber, however, she does, against her will, but rouses herself from the painful state of drowsiness by poking the few sparks that remain in the grate, putting a fresh bit of candle on the saveall, and taking a few hurried steps along the passage to the street-door. A step approaches, but the tread is the firm footfall of sobriety. Another—the rattle of a lantern, and the calling of the hour, announce the watchman. She returns to her chair, and tries to read again. Again she falls asleep, but to rouse herself again to a painful consciousness that she is committing a conjugal offence.

At length a confused shuffling of feet reaches her ears, mingled with loud laughing, singing, and screeching. She listens, and distinctly hears her husband singing the last verse of his last comic song, in a thick, drunken tone, and his companions hurrahing and applauding him. Then comes a chorus of "We won't go home till morning"—"Needles and pins, when a man's married his sorrow begins," or some such suitable melody. The night-bell is then rung fiercely, and Mrs. Boskey hearing the "good night, old fellow"—"good night, my boys—remarkable pleasant evening—very," and the sound of the retreating footsteps of the roysterers, who have discharged the duties of good fellowship by seeing their companion safely at his own door and clinging to his own paling, quickly opens the door with "Is that you, my love? You're *rather* late, ain't you?" To which Mr. Humidus replies, snappishly,

"Late, marm, what do *you* mean by late? And if I am late, what's that to you? (Hiccup.) A medical man, marm, can't call his time his own. (Hiccup.)"

Mrs. Boskey, knowing it to be useless to remonstrate, bolts the door, and precedes her husband to the kitchen. He manages to follow her by zigzagging and leaning for support, first against the left-hand side of the passage, and then against the right. Then holding on by the back of a chair, he stares, first at the clock and then at his wife, with that obliquity of vision peculiar to intoxication, and in a savage, thick tone, inquires,

"Well, marm! how much longer am I to stand here, eh, marm? (Hiccup.) Where's my bran'y-a-war'er? Why the devil, marm, don't you make my bran'y-a-war'er? (Hiccup.)"

"Yes, my dear," replies Mrs. Boskey, in meek tones, "I was only just going—"

"That's always your excuse, marm—always; and a very lame excuse it is. (Hiccup.) But I beg to ask you once more, marm, are you going to make my bran'y-a-war'er? Answer me *that*, marm. (Hiccup.) I'll not stand it any longer, marm."

To prove his assertion, Mr. Humidus throws down his hat in a passion, and with difficulty seats himself in his chair. Mrs. Boskey mixes his glass of brandy and water as quickly as possible, and then inquires—

“Shall I go to bed now, my dear, or shall you want any thing else?”

“Want any thing else? What do you mean, marm? Go to bed? Am I to go to bed in my boots? (Hiccup.) Call this bran’y and war’er? I’m afraid, Mrs. Boskey, you’re drunk, marm, and can’t see. (Hiccup.)”

Mrs. Boskey, knowing what this means, adds a little strength to the draught, and, pointing to the bootjack, which she had placed ready for use, begs to know if he will draw his boots off now.

“Boots, off, marm? How can you be fool enough to suppose that any man, after a hard day’s work, can see such a very small hole in such a very diminutive bootjack as that? D—n the thing, take it away, marm!”

He, however, saves her the trouble of doing so by kicking it violently to the further side of the kitchen. Mrs. Boskey then tremblingly asks if she shall pull them off for him.

“In course, marm, unless you wish me to sleep in them,” replies Boskey, with difficulty raising one of his legs by clinging firmly to the seat of the chair with both his hands. Mrs. Boskey then, after soiling her fair fingers with a commixture of blacking and mud, with difficulty draws off the boots, and gets abused for nearly destroying his equilibrium and precipitating his oscillating body on the ground.

“Has any body called to-day since I’ve been out?”

“Only the milkman, Humidus. He says he won’t supply us any longer unless we pay up the last five weeks’ score.”

“Oh! he does—does he? (Hiccup.) And why the devil, marm, don’t you pay him then?”

“Why you know, my dear, you have given me no money.”

“It’s false, marm! it’s a lie! it was only this very morning I gave you all the money in the till. Eh, marm?”

“Yes, my dear, just three halfpence, which a little boy paid for an ounce of Epsom salts.”

“No matter what it was *for*. What’s become of *that*, I should like to know? Your extravagance is unbearable! (Hiccup.)”

“Then the baker says he can’t trust any longer. He must have his money—you know he needs it.”

“*Kneads* it? *kneads* it? not so bad that, ah! ah! Mrs. B., you’re a female wag. (Hiccup.) Capital pun, by Jove!—book it for to-morrow’s club. Take a little bran’y-a-war’er, Mrs. B., to christen your first joke. Ain’t there any left? Well, never mind, let’s go to bed, and d—n the baker!”

Mrs. Humidus leads the way with the last bit of dip, and Mr. Humidus, relying on the friendly aid of a stout banister, manages to stumble up stairs and scramble into bed, where, in less than one minute, the somnolency caused by "potations pottle deep" falls upon him, and proclaims its victory over its victim by triumphant snores. Mrs. Boskey undresses herself, and fetches the baby from the maid's room. Fondling and caressing it, she cries herself to sleep by the side of its inanimate father.

Such scenes as these were of almost nightly occurrence, and, though Mrs. Boskey, like the eels which grew used to being skinned, was accustomed to such brutal treatment, her health and spirits suffered severely. Her female friends, to whom she sometimes revealed the cause of her ill health and melancholy looks, gave but little credit to her statement, but thought the fault must be all on her side, as Mr. Humidus Boskey was "such a funny and agreeable person, and so good-tempered!" Appearances, as the copy-books say, are so deceitful!

With this funny and agreeable gentleman Ephraim Field gradually grew too intimate. But a few years before he would have been disgusted with him. A love of drinking and good fellowship, however, had gradually grown upon him, and he was glad to find any associate who would sit with him, and make one at a little snug dinner, especially if he could take a part in a duet or glee.

To Mr. Humidus the acquaintance of Ephraim was invaluable, and he cultivated it perseveringly. His finances, owing to his neglect of business and his large family, were generally in a suspicious state, and his exchequer empty. Ephraim, whenever he saw him dull and heard him singing half a tone too flat, divined the cause, and, as he had, as he thought, plenty of money, and but very few calls upon him, freely allowed his new-found friend to draw upon him for 20*l.* or 30*l.* at a time, and was satisfied by an I O U for the amount, and the sight of Boskey's reinvigorated spirits.

Mrs. Field and Agnes were not even aware that Ephraim had formed an intimacy with Mr. Humidus; nor, if they had been aware of it, would they have been shocked at it, as, from their retired mode of life, they knew little or nothing of their neighbours but by name. Mrs. Sewlight, also, was too much engaged with scouring the house and her children to listen to or talk tittle-tattle. Mrs. Field, therefore, remained in blissful ignorance of her husband's gradual degradation in society. She was aware that he kept later hours than formerly, but was rather pleased at it than not, as it gave her more time for reading and music with her daughter.

It is possible, had Mr. Gamut been alive, that Ephraim might have been saved in good time from the ruin which impended over

him. He, however, met with his death from his inordinate passion for music.

At one of the grand commemorations, when a concert on a large scale is given in the theatre at Oxford, Mr. Gamut, being one of the stewards, was exceedingly anxious that every thing should go off well. On the morning of the first day's concert, the professional who played the triangle was too much indisposed to attend. Mr. Gamut, not knowing where to find another professional triangler, volunteered to undertake the instrumental parts for the missing man. Unfortunately, he was placed immediately below an enthusiastic and vigorous kettle-drum player. This gentleman, in the midst of an overture, in trying to give additional impetus to a grand "crash," missed his instrument, and hit poor Mr. Gamut so severe a blow on the head as to knock him, music-stool and all, from the summit to the bottom of a very lofty orchestra.

Every body said the "crash" was the grandest that had ever been heard within the walls of the theatre, though no one was aware that the grand effect had been produced by the fall of Mr. Gamut and his stool just in the right bar of the loudest movement, except himself and the kettle-drum-player. Gamut was delighted with the way in which the overture went off, and, if an *encore* had been called, would, probably, have volunteered a second tumble to have ensured the same success. He felt but little from his bruises as long as the concert lasted, but, when the excitement was over, he fell seriously ill, and soon "closed his performances," as he would have expressed it himself, "in a solo in *he flat*."

"Ephraim," said Geoffrey Sewtight to his early friend, meeting him in the High Street, as he was carrying a green baize bag full of boots, shoes, pumps, and slippers to some gentleman's rooms—"Ephraim, I have been too busy to see much of you lately, but have been very anxious to see you on several subjects."

"Then pray walk in doors, Geoff., we can't communicate here in the street," replied Ephraim; for, to say the truth, he was rather shocked at the green bag and apron of Geoffrey.

"I haven't time, now," said Sewtight; "I am always as good as my word, I promised to bring these goods home at twelve o'clock this day, and St. Mary's is just on the point of striking. I will call, however, as I return."

Geoffrey was as "good as his word" in this instance, and, upon entering the elegantly-furnished dining-room of Ephraim, drew a deep sigh and a chair towards the fire.

"Take some lunch," said Ephraim, "a sardine and a glass of Bordo."

"Thank you," said Geoffrey, "but I prefer a slice of bread and cheese, and a glass of ale."

"Well, what is it you wish to say?" inquired Ephraim, after he



had supplied his friend with the luncheon to which he showed what he considered a plebeian preference.

"Nothing agreeable, Ephraim, and therefore I would willingly leave it unsaid; but my real regard for you tells me I should be wrong to hide from you the injurious reports I have heard of you,"

"Injurious reports of me!" said Ephraim, amazed, and quaffing off his Bourdeaux.

"Yes," said Geoffrey. "I heard this morning that a check of your's for a small amount, too, had been presented at your bankers by that disgrace to his profession, Mr. Humidus Boskey, and refused, as there were no 'effects.'"

"The deuce!" said Ephraim.

"Yes," continued Geoffrey, "and that a bill at three months for 500*l.* had been noted and returned."

"Oh! that's true enough;—the fact is, I leave all that sort of thing to my foreman, and the stupid fellow neglected to enter it in the bill-book; but it's of no consequence, my dear Geoff., I've ten or twelve thousand pounds on my books at this moment," said Ephraim.

"I had rather they were in your banker's iron safe," replied Geoffrey, "but this, though bad enough, may be remedied. I have cash lying by me, and can supply you until you get in some of your bills. What I have to draw your attention to, and I am surprised you have not observed it yourself, is the evidently dangerous state of your wife. She called on us with Agnes yesterday, and if she is not in a rapid decline I am mistaken. I never saw a person so altered in my life."

"Oh! you're wrong, depend on it," said Ephraim; "she was always delicate, you know—she shuts herself up too much, I must get her out more."

"I hope I am wrong," replied Geoffrey; "but I thought it my duty to mention these things to you. Keep more at home, Ephraim, and look more after your family and your business; give up singing, and that Mr. Humidus Boskey. Excuse my boldness, Ephraim, and command my services at all times."

Thus saying, Geoffrey laid down his knife and the tankard, shook his friend feelingly by the hand, and resumed his green bag.

"Well, Geoffrey, I'll borrow a thousand till I get my bills in," said Ephraim; "for, to tell the truth, I have overdrawn rather largely at my banker's."

As soon as Geoffrey was gone, Ephraim rang the bell violently. He told the maid who answered it, to send young Geoffrey to him immediately.

Greatly to the surprise of the young man and the whole establishment, the day-book, journal, ledger, cash, and order-books were ordered to be carried into the dining-room. Ephraim brooded

over the contents of each for some time, surveyed the "silver-plate, cut-glass, and decanters," on his table, cast his eyes over the rich furniture of the room, and shut the books with a deep sigh. He then leant back in his easy-chair, and fell into a profound reverie, from which he was aroused by the entrance of Mr. Humidus Boskey, who came into the room singing the chorus of a drinking-song, and suiting the action to the word by pouring out and tossing off a tumbler of Bourdeaux.

"I am glad you've called," said Ephraim; "I was going to send for you professionally—not for myself, for I never was ill in my life, except from a little over-indulgence, which a little brandy and soda-water always remedies. I am told that Mrs. Field is looking ill. You have not been introduced to her, but you will oblige me by allowing me to introduce you now. Observe, I shall not present you as a medical man, but as a private friend. Examine her appearance, and tell me candidly the result of your examination."

Mrs. Field and Agnes were summoned into the dining-room, and introduced to Mr. Humidus, who, being really clever in his profession, and very gentlemanly in his manners in the early part of the day, insinuated himself into the good graces of the ladies; and, without her knowing it, managed to put a great many professional inquiries to Mrs. Field, which gave him an insight into her real bodily ailments.

When the ladies retired, Mr. Humidus offering his hand to Ephraim, begged him not to be shocked, but bear the intelligence, which he felt it his duty to communicate, like a man.

Mr. Humidus, then, in a very feeling manner, for which no one who had seen him in his cups would have given him credit, explained to his friend his reasons for believing that consumption was doing its cruel task rapidly, and that Mrs. Field's days had dwindled to a very short span.

"Then," said Ephraim, "I must request your constant attendance professionally. Call in this evening, but remember—" and Ephraim shook his head negatively, and put his hand to his lips imitative of a person taking his glass of wine.

"On my honour—yes!" said Humidus, as he left the room.

Ephraim went up stairs to the study, where he found his wife lying on a sofa, and looking weary and exhausted.

"Agnes, my dear, you look ill."

"I am not well, I believe," replied his wife; "but I cannot say what ails me. I feel listless and unwilling to exert myself. My appetite is not very good, and my nights are sleepless. I confine myself and that dear child too much. We must take more exercise."

"I was going to recommend your doing so," said Ephraim; "but as you feel ill, I wish you would consult my friend Mr. Boskey professionally—he is coming here this evening."

"Oh, yes, with great pleasure," replied Mrs. Field; "I like what I have seen of him very much. He is quiet, and gentlemanly in his manners, and seems to be a very considerate and feeling man."

Having gained his point, and chatted with his daughter, Ephraim returned to the inspection of his books, and the result was not quite satisfactory. He dined with his wife and child, and stayed at home all the evening, expecting Humidus every minute. At length he arrived, but not until after Mrs. Field had retired to bed.

Ephraim informed him of this fact, and Humidus nodding a "never mind" to his friend, took a chamber-candle, lit it, and walked pretty steadily up stairs.

Mrs. Field, who was expecting him, extended her wrist to him that he might feel her pulse, put out her tongue, and told him all her ailments in succession.

Humidus said nothing, but held tight to the bedpost with one hand, while he went through the examination of the pulse with the other: and then making a kind of lurch towards the door, muttered to Ephraim loudly enough to be heard by Agnes and her mother,

"DEAD in less than a week, by jingo!"

## CHAPTER XIX.

THE sudden tidings of her nearly approaching dissolution, thus thoughtlessly announced to her by the half-intoxicated Boskey, was a dreadful shock to Mrs. Field. None of us, however well prepared to die, can hear the sudden summons to our grave without a shudder. Mrs. Field, though she had felt unwell and weak for some months, had no notion that her sickness was unto death. When, then, she heard the sentence of death within seven days pronounced against her, a sudden tremour pervaded her limbs, a suffocating feeling arose in her throat, and a cold, clammy perspiration burst from every pore of her body. She closed her eyes and muttered a few inaudible words in prayer, then, opening them again, and, fixing them on her child, uttered aloud, "and in thy mercy look down upon and protect my child."

Agnes, however, heard not the kind prayer offered in her behalf. The sudden news of her parent's danger—of the death of the only being whom she had loved with that intensity of affection which a disposition like her's was calculated to cherish, struck like a dagger to her heart. She stood with her arms extended and her eyeballs starting from their sockets, gazing at her mother as *though she would penetrate and examine her frame to ascertain the truth of the horrid announcement she had heard. Suddenly*

perception failed her—her eyes remained open, but she saw not ; her brain seemed to whirl round and round—a feeling of intense sickness came upon her, and she fell with a loud shriek by the side of her mother, just as she had uttered the prayer for her safety and protection.

“Agnes! my poor child! the blow has been too much for you,” said Mrs. Field, raising herself in bed and rubbing the temples of her daughter.

She was cold, icy cold, and it suddenly struck her mother that the shock had killed her. She sprung from her bed, shrieking, “My child! my child! He has killed my child!” and, rushing to the bell-pull, fell ere she reached it.

Her screams reached the ears of her husband and Mr. Boskey, who were descending the stairs. Ephraim hurried back to the bedroom and found his wife on the ground, bleeding from her mouth perfectly insensible, and his daughter swooning on the bed.

Just as he had raised the former from the floor, and placed her on the bed by the side of her child, Mr. Boskey came staggering into the room, and, seizing the bedpost for support, hiccupped out “Broke a vessel on the lungs—all up.”

“Stand aside, beast!” said Ephraim; “this is your doing.”

Mr. Boskey tried to obey, but in the attempt let go of his support and fell upon the carpet, whence, in a sitting posture, with his back supported by the bedstead, he began to defend himself against the “very wicked and false insinuations” of Ephraim.

Field was justly irritated by the brutal conduct of Humidus, and, seizing him by the collar, dragged him to the staircase, and kicked him from the top of the stairs to the bottom. He then rang the bedroom-bell and despatched the frightened maid for another medical man. During her absence his agony was indescribable. He first of all stood silently gazing at the crimson blood which flowed in jets from his wife’s mouth. He then examined the marble looks of his child, and thinking it might be in his power to recover her, sprinkled her copiously with water from the ewer.

After a few minutes, Agnes, heaving a deep sigh, opened her eyes to gaze on her mother, but the moment she saw her face and the bedclothes covered with her blood, with a shudder, she relapsed into a state of syncope.

Poor Ephraim stood wringing his hands, almost maddened at the sight before him. He called on each alternately, in the most endearing terms. He then began to utter every vile reproach his mind could suggest, and his tongue utter against Mr. Humidus, as the cause of all his miseries.

A long time seemed to have elapsed—seconds seemed minutes, minutes hours—since he had sent for further aid, and it had not arrived. He looked out of the window down the long vista of the High

Street, but no one was in view. He leaned over the balustrades in hopes of hearing some one below, but nothing was to be heard but the stertorous breathing of Mr. Boskey, who lay half-stunned with his fall, and beastly drunk, on the mat at the bottom of the stairs. In a rage Ephraim' rushed down and dragged the doctor, who had not power to resist, into the street, and gave him in charge of a watchman to be conveyed home. Scarcely had he closed the door before Dr. Drybones arrived, guided by the servant. This gentleman, who was tall, thin, and very precise in his manner, but enjoying the reputation of the cleverest man out of London, took off his clerical-looking hat from the top of his neatly-curled brown wig, and, after carefully smoothing the nap of the beaver, deposited it with great care on the hall-table, and put his gloves, which he drew slowly from his hands, inside the crown, and laid his gold-headed cane across the brims.

Ephraim, who was fearful his wife would expire ere they could reach her room, begged and prayed Dr. Drybones to make haste. The doctor, however, never hurried himself, or lost his temper, or his dignity : making a very polite bow, he assured him he was quite ready to follow him, now that he had seen " the article of dress which protected his head placed ready for immediate resumption on his return."

The moment he entered the chamber his stiffness of figure relaxed, and his apathy left him. Nature asserted her empire over formality. Though used, from many years' practice, to scenes of disaster and woe, never had he seen one more disastrous or woful than the one before him. Mrs. Field was dead, and her features were beginning to assume the pallor and rigidity of death. Her face looked paler, probably from the mass of clotted gore with which the pillow on which her head lay was encrusted. By her side lay the lovely form of Agnes, resembling more closely some finely-chiselled statue than an animate being.

Dr. Drybones placed his fingers on the pulse of Mrs. Field, and, turning to her husband with a tear trickling down his thin and furrowed cheek, in tones of deep sympathy observed—

" The mother, sir, I regret to say, is beyond the reach of human aid ; but the daughter, I trust, may soon be restored to you again."

Then, such is the force of habit, he took his gold snuff-box from his waistcoat-pocket, and applied a copious pinch to his nostrils, as if he were waiting for Ephraim to recover from his sobbing, sufficiently to make some answer to his remarks.

Ephraim, however, was too much stupified by his unexpected loss to be able to make any observation in reply. The doctor therefore beckoned to the servant, who was sobbing as though her heart would burst, and with her help conveyed the unconscious Agnes

to her own bedchamber. While the girl, by his orders, was undressing her young mistress, he wrote a few words with his pencil, and when she had placed Agnes in bed, despatched her with them to a neighbouring apothecary. She soon returned, bringing with her the prescribed remedies.

But not to dwell upon this sad scene, let it suffice to say that, by the kind attention and great skill of her physician, Agnes recovered sufficiently, some weeks after her mother's remains had been consigned to earth, to accompany her father to the Isle of Wight. There, in the quiet and healthy village of Shanklin, her nerves partially recovered their tone, and the hue of convalescence returned to her cheeks. Those pursuits, however, which she had been accustomed to share with the mother, were still distasteful to her. Poetry had lost its charms, and the notes of her harp grated harshly on her ear. In vain did she endeavour to sing the songs her lost parent had taught her; her voice faltered, and its tones suddenly ceased, like the fitful whisperings of the summer's gale, which ceases to blow ere the smooth surface of the lake is ruffled by its breath. Her father watched her with tender care, and by inducing her to visit the lovely scenes with which the Isle of Wight abounds, gradually prevented her thoughts from preying on her mind.

During their absence, Geoffrey Sewtlight examined into Ephraim's affairs, and finding it impossible for him to go on, unless he got all, or the greater part of his bills paid—which is not a very easy matter with Oxford customers—called his creditors together. These gentlemen, when they found there would be enough to pay their demands in full, and a surplus for Ephraim to start again with, consented to strike a friendly docket against him.

Ephraim was made a bankrupt, and, as he had paid them twenty shillings in the pound, all his creditors signed his certificate. When he returned to Oxford, he resumed his business and his former premises. By Geoffrey's advice he disposed of all his useless furniture, plate, and Bordeaux wines, hired a respectable-looking housekeeper, and let off part of his house in lodgings.

This was absolutely necessary; as the surplus left him, after paying all his debts, was but small; and the trade of tailoring requires "long tick," especially in Oxford. Ephraim, however, got on well, as he was now his own foreman, and kept his own books; he also eschewed glee-clubs, harmonious meetings, and the society of Mr. Humidus Boskey. It did not, indeed, require much exertion on Ephraim's part to effect this latter arrangement, as Mr. Boskey carefully avoided meeting his former friend and associate, lest he should produce and call upon him to pay sundry sums scrawled upon little scraps of paper with initials I O U before them.

Mr. Humidus Boskey was not long fated to amuse his friends

abroad, and abuse his wife at home. He was in the habit of attending the Ashdown-park coursing meetings every year. Upon one of these occasions, when he had left his patients in the lurch to look at the greyhounds in the leash, he started the evening before the meeting to be ready in the morning with his sorry back recovered from the fatigues of a journey of twenty-two miles. He put up as usual at the house of one of his brother medicals in the neighbourhood of Lambourn. This gentleman was, like Humidus, addicted to glees and goblets of grog; they therefore agreed remarkably well together, and Humidus had his "bran'y-a-war'ers" to his heart's content. While upon the ground; and in the midst of some of the finest courses in Compton-bottom, a message reached Humidus stating that a lady—one of his few and best patients—required his immediate attendance. He despatched the messenger back with an assurance that he would return to Oxford as quickly as possible. His friend, "on hospitable thoughts intent," insisted on his dining before he set out upon his long journey. Humidus consented, ate his dinner, drank his bottle of port, and proposed starting. As it was a bleak, cold day, just in the beginning of the suicidal month of November, a little "bran'y-a-war'er" was prescribed by his friend as a "topper-up" to keep out the cold. One glass led to one more, and that one more to several other one mores. Duets then commenced, and in the pleasures of harmony the pains of his expected patient were forgotten for some hours.

At last Humidus determined to start, he drank off his *last* glass of "bran'y-a-war'er" and mounted his horse. The night was intensely dark, and the snow was beginning to fall in large and heavy flakes. He, however, was well primed, and ready to go off at all risks. The road from Lambourn, over the Downs towards Wantage, whither he was recommended to proceed, is perhaps of all roads the most dreary and difficult to find, even to those who know it well. Humidus got on pretty straight, considering he rode all on one side, for the first mile out of Lambourn, but when he mounted the hill, and came off the hard road on to the downs the tracks were all obliterated by the snow. He cantered on, and as he had started with the snow coming dab, dab, in his face, and it still continued to do so, he erroneously fancied he was proceeding in a straight and right direction.

After two or three hours' riding, he was surprised to find himself still upon the open downs, without any signs of a town, or even a solitary habitation near him. He pulled up, and thought on what was best to be done, and finally resolved to leave himself to the guidance of fate, and Gallipot, his nag. He therefore threw the reins on the horse's neck; but as Gallipot turned short round, and seemed to him to be retrograding to the point from whence they *had started*, he got in a rage, and seizing the reins, began to bel-

hour him with his whip. Gallipot, though a patient horse, resented this unkind treatment, and commenced a series of kicks and plunges, which at last unseated his master, and threw him over his head.

The horse wisely returned to Lambourn, and on the following morning Humidus was found by a shepherd with his long legs only remaining above the surface of a deep snowdrift. Verdict of a Berkshire jury, "Accidental death, by natural smotheration in the snow."

To return to my tale. During her mother's lifetime the beauty of Agnes Field was unknown, except to her own immediate friends, the Sewtights, and the persons employed about the establishment, for she seldom went into public. When, however, the two sets of lodgings were let to two young men, and Mrs. Caterer, the housekeeper, had the management of Agnes, the fame of her surpassing loveliness began to be spread abroad, and all the young men were anxious to be introduced to Field's lodgers, in hopes of catching a glance at his daughter.

Agnes, too, much to her annoyance, was compelled by her father to go out every day for the benefit of her health. Mrs. Caterer, who accompanied her, after she had "cleaned herself," had no notion of the beauties of green fields and flowery solitudes. She preferred exhibiting her new bonnet in the street, or in the most frequented walks. She felt herself of some importance, too, as the guardian and companion of the prettiest girl in Oxford; and was rather proud of the notice taken of her by the young men who visited her master's "one and two pairs," in hopes of obtaining an interview with her ward. To say that Agnes was insulted as she walked along, would be using too strong a term; but she was greatly annoyed by the admiring stares of all the university men whom she met, and who never failed paying what they considered a tribute to her beauty, by gazing at her as long as they could see her. Many and many were the bumpers of thick and strong undergraduate port that were swallowed, amidst loud cheers, to the "health of the lovely Agnes Field!"

It will now be necessary for me to describe the characters of the two gentlemen who occupied Field's lodgings.

The "gentleman in the one pair" was a Mr. Christopher Chinks, though better known among his intimates by the title of Kit Chinks. He was the son of a respectable country gentleman, a fellow-commoner of St. Luke's, and a very great ass. His most conspicuous foible was a tendency to praise his own personalities, which were certainly far from despicable, and to boast of his amatory achievements. What his thoughts and intentions were in the matter of Agnes Field, will best appear by letting the reader hear a conver-



sation which passed in his lodgings a short time after he took possession of them.

"Kit, old fellow," said one of three or four undergraduates who had been wining with him, "you're a lucky dog to get these lodgings."

"Devilish lucky," said all.

"Why! ya—es," replied Kit, who affected the fine in his speech, "they are enormous convenient, and ex—cessive play—sant."

"Oh! I don't mean that, old fellow; I mean for the chance of having a view now and then of the schneider's pretty daughter," said the first.

"Why, ya—es," observed Kit, looking hesitatingly critical, "she is certainly an inordinate formosity—at least I think I may vaynture to say so."

"Have you been introduced to her yet?" inquired a second.

"No: de—cidedly no. I flayter myself, though, that a vary minute intimation of my wishes would be ayfectual in procuring an einterview," answered Kit, turning quite round to look at himself in a mirror.

"Then you haven't heard her sing yet?" said a third. "They tell me she sings like a canary bird, and chirps like a linnet."

"I shall rayquire her to seeng the vary first time I see her, and judge of her musicaylities."

"I'll bet you a pound," said the first, "you don't even get to speak to her."

"And I. and I." said Nos. two, three, and four.

"Done," said Kit, "I bayt a pound round, and I'm safe to win; for, if she maynifests any scrupulosity, I shall invade her domaystic privacy. Mother Caterer is a raygular Cayrberus, but I'll find a sop for her."

The other lodger, the "gentleman in the two-pair," was a cadet of a highly respectable family, closely allied to nobility. He was a commoner of St. Matthew's, and was reading hard to qualify himself for the bar, by which profession, through family patronage and zealous industry, he hoped to realize a fortune. His career at college had rendered him a favourite with every one. His rigid attention to lectures and college duties was highly satisfactory to the dons, and his participating, as far as his means and his reading allowed him, in all the manly pursuits of his equals, made him a general favourite with them. Horace Hardyman, indeed, was a model after whose fashion any parent who knew him would gladly have urged his son to form himself. He was manly, high-spirited, exceedingly good-tempered, and possessed of an unusual quantity of that valuable commodity, self-control.

What he thought of Agnes will best appear from a letter written to his father, soon after his residence at Field's.

“ My dear Father,

“ I write to thank you for your kind consideration in allowing me to engage a private tutor, without whose assistance I doubt whether I should be able to ensure my class. I have received every attention from my college tutors, but it is impossible for them, consistently with their duties, to devote much time to an individual. I trust that my success in the schools will compensate you for the inconvenience which even this disbursement of so small a sum must cause you, whose means are so limited, and whose claimants on them are so numerous.

“ I have kept all my terms in college, and have taken lodgings at the house of Field, a tailor, in the High Street. Strange to say, he has a daughter, who is said to be one of the most highly-accomplished young women in this place. She owes her acquirements to her mother, now no more, who, though humbly born, was well educated, and engaged for many years as governess in a private family. Agnes, being the only child of her father, and he a widower, is greatly to be pitied. She is placed under the care of the house-keeper, one Mrs. Caterer, who appears to me not to be exactly the sort of person to be entrusted with the superintendence of so lovely a girl as Agnes Field. I can vouch for her beauty, my dear father, as I have both seen and spoken to her—in the presence of her father. I pity her because I think she will be subjected to much annoyance from the men, who, you know, profess an excess of admiration for any thing pretty in the shape of a woman, and have any thing but an agreeable way of displaying their devotion to the fair sex.

“ Do not fear that my ‘ pity is akin to love.’ I cannot afford to fall in love with any body but the benchers of Lincoln’s Inn and the attorneys, who, I hope, will return my affection—the former by calling me to the bar, and the latter by supplying me with briefs.

“ There is a perfumed puppy called Mr. Kit Chinks, lodging in the rooms below mine, who, I understand, has been laying several bets that he will compel Miss Field to sing to him, even if he invades the privacy of her apartments. If he attempts such an unmanly act, I think you will fully approve of the determination I have formed—of kicking him down stairs, or throwing him out of the window.

“ Assure my dear mother and sisters of my uninterrupted love, and believe me,

“ Your very affectionate son,

“ HORACE HARDYMAN.”

A few nights after Horace had despatched this letter to his father, Mr. Kit Chinks, who had thrown out several hints of a wish to be introduced to Miss Field—but unsuccessfully—to his great surprise, began to sound Mrs. Caterer on the subject. Now Mrs. Caterer, of the two lodgers, preferred Mr. Kit, because, as she said, “he was so handsome, smelt so sweet, and dressed so remarkable illigant; whereas Mr. Hardyman, though he was well enough for a man, hadn’t a notion of tying a neckcloth, and wore plain, gold studs.” She had convinced herself that if Agnes and Kit could only “come together” once, they would fall mutually in love with each other, and make the prettiest couple that ever went to church together. She hinted as much to Miss Field, and received a more snappish reply than she believed so pretty a mouth as her’s could utter, and was positively forbidden even to allude to a lodger again.

When, therefore, Mr. Kit applied to her to obtain him an introduction to her young mistress, and backed his application with the present of an enormous red cornelian brooch, Mrs. Caterer pocketed the jewellery with many thanks and courtesies, but respectfully declined the office of go-between.

Kit thus lost his brooch, and was afraid of losing his bets. His friends, moreover, were daily jeering him about the failure of his plans with Miss Field. His vanity was wounded, and he determined, at every risk, to intrude upon Agnes that very night. He had made himself acquainted with the localities of her study, under the pretence of looking over the house with her father, who, being proud of his child’s abilities, had been weak enough to take him into her room, in her absence, to show him her drawings.

Kit was bold and impudent enough with that class of women whose modesty does not stand in the way of their preferment; but when he thought upon the plan he was about to put in execution, for intruding upon and insulting a pure, modest girl, he confessed to himself he felt like a scamp and a coward.

To give himself courage enough for the attempt which his *honnour*, as he called it, compelled him to make, he rung his bell, and ordered up a bottle of port wine, with lemons, spice, and other materials for converting it into bishop, which he believed to be the most effectual cordial for stimulating his bravery and strengthening his nerves.

As tumbler after tumbler of the delicious fluid passed his lips, the thermometer of his courage rose several degrees; with the last glass it got up to impudence, and he prepared for action. He exchanged his boots for a pair of thin, creakless, red morocco slippers, and substituted for his coat a very handsome twilled-silk dressing-gown, in which he flattered himself he was irresistible. He brushed his curly hair and whiskers, and applied a little *huile à la*

rose, to give them a brilliant gloss. He then perfumed his silk pocket-handkerchief with *esprit de mille fleurs*, waved it gracefully so as to scatter its fragrance round his person, and show his diamond-ring, and examined himself in the mirror with evident self-satisfaction.

Horace Hardyman was sitting in his rooms deeply engaged over Aristotle's Ethics. He had congratulated himself on being able to commence reading earlier than usual, from the singular fact of there not being a row in Kit Chink's rooms below, who generally had a noisy party every evening. He had taken his three cups of strong green tea, and tied a damp towel round his head to keep his eyes sleepless, and his head cool and collected. As he was analyzing in his mind the contents of the last chapter which he had read, he fancied he heard the creaking of the banisters, and then the stealthy tread of some one passing his door. He went on reading, however, giving Mrs. Caterer, Field, or some one else, credit for not wishing to disturb him in his studies. In less than five minutes afterwards he was alarmed by a loud scream. He sprung to the door, opened it, and listened. The scream was repeated more loudly, and with half-a-dozen bounds he was up the next flight of stairs, and at Miss Field's study-door. Upon opening it he found Mr. Kit Chinks upon one knee in the middle of the room, making violent gesticulations to Agnes, who had retreated to the bell, which she was ringing, and screaming alternately.

When Horace entered, Agnes ceased to ring and scream, and ran to him, begging him, if he were a gentleman, to protect her from a villain who had dared to come into her room and insult her. Mr. Chinks rose from the ground, flourished his handkerchief, and looked magnificent. The contrast in the appearance of the two young men was very great; for Horace, instead of being dressed like a mountebank, and perfumed like a polecat, had no neckerchief on, his body was enveloped in an old cotton reading-gown, and his head bound round with a towel *à la turque*.

Horace, after whispering a few words to Agnes, who was clinging to his arm, led her to the sofa, and begged her not to be alarmed. He then walked up to Chinks, and pointed significantly to the door. Chinks, however, put his gold eye-glass to his nose, and in effeminate tones inquired, "Who the hayll are you?"

"Leave the room, sir, I beg of you immediately," said Horace.

"I shayn't, fayllow!" replied Chinks.

"Don't be frightened, I beg, Miss Field," said Horace, as he seized Chinks by his elegant flowered stock, and twisted it round until he was black in the face, and his eyes protruded fearfully. After giving him a severe shaking, Horace dragged him to the landing, and hurled him down the first flight of stairs, at the bottom of which he rose, and, after rectifying his neckcloth, shook his fist at

Horace, and told him "he should heyar from him to-morrow morning."

Mrs. Caterer, who was hurrying up stairs as fast as her heavy person would permit her, to ascertain the cause of the violent ringing of her mistress's bell, met Chinks as he was descending and wiping his bleeding nose. She was much alarmed, and kindly inquired the cause of his wounded condition; to which Chinks replied, by telling her to "go to the divil for an old she-dog."

Horace remained with Agnes until Caterer made her appearance, and, after he had explained the whole affair to her, wished them a respectful good night, and returned to his rooms. He pursued his studies as calmly as if nothing had happened, except now and then fancying he saw Miss Field's lovely face presenting itself to his eyes, instead of a properispomenon Greek accent.

In the morning, immediately after chapel, a "friend," as the man is properly designated who does his best to induce another man to shoot his "principal," called on Horace to demand satisfaction in Christopher Chinks's name.

"Is he in his rooms now, sir?" inquired Horace.

"He is, sir," replied the "friend."

"Then," said Horace, "if you will accompany me down to him, he shall have satisfaction on the spot."

Mr. Chinks, who was walking up and down his room, hoping that Horace would send an humble apology for the assault he had committed, was rather "taken aback," when he saw him enter with his friend. His politeness, however, did not desert him; he made a stiff bow backwards, and begged him to "take a chay-ir."

Horace declined the proffered seat, and addressed him thus:

"Mr. Chinks, you have sent to me to demand satisfaction for my rough usage of you last night, and you shall have it. You grossly insulted a young lady, because, as I imagine, she was merely a tradesman's daughter, and you felt you could do so with impunity. Now, sir, unless you immediately sit down and write an humble apology to her and her father—the tailor—sir, I shall feel it my duty to lay the matter before your college. As to your ridiculous notion of calling upon me to give you what the world terms satisfaction, I treat it with the contempt it deserves. Now, sir, may I know your decision?"

"Whart had I bayter do?" said Chinks to his "friend."

"Precisely what Mr. Hardyman suggests," said his friend. "You appear to me to have forgotten the character of a gentleman in your behaviour to Miss Field."

"Oh! vary wayll—if *you* say so I must consaynt," said Kit, and wrote the apology which Horace dictated, and which he sent to Agnes with his compliments by Mrs. Caterer.

By a very singular coincidence Mr. Chinks was taken very ill

that very same day, and was strongly recommended by his medical to try change of air. It is also remarkable that when he returned to Oxford to take his degree, he did not even inquire if Field's lodgings were to be let.

At breakfast-time Mr. Field called upon Horace, and thanked him fervently and sincerely for protecting his daughter, and begged that he would gratify him by walking into his breakfast-room to receive her thanks in person. To this it was not probable he would demur, and after paying a little more attention to his toilet than was his wont, Horace presented himself before the grateful girl, who, with tears in her eyes, repeated the thanks which her father had already proffered.

I could, if I were so inclined, spin out several chapters in recounting how the services rendered to Agnes, and her gratitude towards him, induced her to admit Horace constantly into her study in the presence of Mrs. Caterer. How his fine, manly, open-hearted disposition, won upon her heart, and what ravages her beauty, sweetness of temper, and accomplishments, made in his breast. I might relate how they grew gradually so intimate that Horace was the constant companion of her walks, even after Mrs. Caterer, through illness, was incapable of accompanying them. How Horace found that, instead of going down to Tenby during "the long" to read with his tutor as he had intended, he could pursue his studies much better if he staid up in Oxford. How little excursions were planned and made to Blenheim, Nuneham, and other pleasant spots. How Agnes grew very anxious about the health of her grandfather, the poor crippled Ephraim, and walked with Horace almost daily to Merton to visit him. All this I could recount, together with the interesting conversations that made the way seem shorter than it really was, and added wings to the fleeting feet of time; but I must merely state the results of all these circumstances. Without any intention of injuring her whom he dearly loved, Horace opened the state of his feelings to her, and received her promise to be his wife, as soon as he had obtained his family's sanction. Agnes in an unguarded moment fell a willing victim to her entire trust in the honour and fidelity of the only man, except her father, with whom she had an opportunity of becoming intimate.

Ephraim was too much engaged in his business to observe what was going on. Mrs. Caterer was still ill. The only person who watched their growing intimacy was young Geoffrey, who acquainted his father with his suspicions that all was not right. Geoffrey, the elder, told his wife, and Mrs. Sewtight thought it her duty to expostulate with Agnes. From her mother, had she lived, Agnes would not have disguised a word or a thought, but deeming the well-meaning Mrs. Sewtight's interference impertinent, she treated *her remarks and expostulations with contempt.*

After the long vacation, which seemed very short to the lovers, was over, the examinations commenced : Horace went up for his degree, and obtained his first class. Agnes, who was fully aware of the importance of his succeeding in the schools, and had resolutely insisted on his persevering in his studies to the neglect of herself, was rewarded for her self-denial by witnessing his joy at his success. She had never doubted for an instant that any obstacle to their union would be offered by his family, and now that his studies were over, she revealed to him the necessity that existed for the speedy fulfilment of his promise to make her his own.

Horace would have married her at once, but Agnes would not consent until his parents' sanction was obtained. To all his urgent solicitations to unite herself to him by a private marriage, her only answer was, "write home and gain your father's consent, and I will be your's immediately."

Horace did write home, but not to his father ; for though they had lived as brothers, rather than as a father and child, he felt unwilling to apply to him directly. Then for the first time he felt the full force of his guilty and imprudent conduct. Never before had he had a secret which he dared not reveal to his father. He wrote to his eldest brother, and after explaining to him the incident that had introduced Agnes to his notice—their subsequent intimacy, and its results—his intense love for her, and his determination to keep and perform the promise he had made to her, begged of him to break the matter to his father, and obtain his permission to present Agnes to his family as his bride.

By return of post came a letter, which Agnes, seeing it bore the postmark of his native place, joyfully conveyed to Horace herself. He opened it, and read as follows :—

" My dear Horace,

" You have got into a sad scrape, and must get out of it in the best way you can. I confess I see but one alternative—either give up the girl, and settle an annuity upon her, to which I will gladly contribute from my small means ; or else marry her, and give up all connexion with your mother and sisters for ever. Your father might possibly be brought to consent to receive you again ; but you know that our mother's pride of high ancestry would never permit her to accept as a daughter-in-law the child of a tradesman. If you are determined that the matter shall be revealed to your father, you must communicate it to him yourself.

" Your affectionate brother,

" CHARLES."

Horace gave this unfeeling letter to Agnes. She read it, and for the first time perceived the true nature of her position. She fell

back upon the sofa, and shed the bitter tears of guilt, remorse, and despair.

Horace, when the paroxysm of her grief had subsided, did all he could to cheer her, but she refused to be comforted. He pressed her again and again to marry him, but she firmly declined to subject him to the displeasure of his friends.

"Oh! would that my poor mother had lived, then had we been spared all this pain and guilt," said Agnes, as she threw herself into Horace's arms, and sobbed upon his breast.

Removing her gently from his arms to the sofa, he sat down, and under the influence of his excited feelings wrote to his father, and told him every thing—except the most important—that Agnes in a few months would most probably be a mother. This fact he concealed from false delicacy towards his beloved. He read the letter to Agnes, and she, fondly believing that no father's breast could be obdurate enough to resist so strong an appeal to his feelings, became calm, and admitted hope once more into her bosom.

Instead of sending an answer to this letter, Mr. Hardyman came up to Oxford. He laid his son's letter before the astonished Ephraim, who had no suspicion that his daughter was the object of his lodger's affections. He explained to him calmly the impossibility of his son's marrying at all at present, and the family disagreements which would be sure to result from his contracting so unequal a marriage, at a future period. To the wretched Agnes he repeated this explanation, and readily obtained from her a written promise, that she never would consent to marry his son clandestinely.

Having thus favourably, as he thought, brought the unpleasant affair to a satisfactory conclusion, he went up to his son's rooms, who was not aware of his arrival. He told him that he had arranged every thing amicably, and showing him Agnes's written promise, insisted upon his leaving Oxford with him immediately. Horace entreated to be permitted to say farewell to Agnes. His father consented, and a message was sent to beg her attendance; but an answer was returned, that Miss Field was too ill to see any one. The carriage was ordered to the door, and in one hour from his father's arrival, Horace was leaving Oxford for ever.

Within a few weeks Ephraim and his fair daughter left Oxford. No one knew whither they went, except Geoffrey Sewtight, who bought the lease of their house, the goodwill and stock of the business for his son who carried it on, assisted by a steady foreman.

Agnes, whose beauty, like a meteor, had blazed forth, been gazed at for a short timè, and then vanished, was soon forgotten, though reports injurious to her reputation were circulated in Oxford by Mrs. Calerer, who called herself an "exceedingly ill-used person, to be turned away and never to have no warning."



Horace went to London, and commenced studying for the bar. He endeavoured secretly to find out by every means in his power what had become of Agnes, but without success. He could find no traces of her. He applied diligently to his studies, and determined, by rigid attention to his profession, to efface the image of his lost Agnes from his heart. In this he partially succeeded, and in his profession fully and beyond his warmest hopes; for, in a very few years, he became one of the *leaders* on the Western circuit, and realized a handsome income by chamber practice in London.

We must pass over a period of about seventeen years. Horace, who is now a respectable middle-aged gentleman of some forty-five years of age, and rather pursy in person, is still a single man, though many ladies have been flinging a matrimonial fly at him, either for their own or their unmarried daughter's sport. He, however, merely glances at the tempting bait, and, fearing to be hooked, cautiously glides along the stream of life without "rising"—except in his profession.

In his leisure hours, which are but few, his company is much sought after, for he is an agreeable, lively, and sociable companion—the life and soul of the society in which he mingles. In his chambers, except when involved in business, he is prone to melancholy and fits of musing. His laundress and his clerk agree in setting him down as a very dull and *lemankully* man. When he spends a leisure evening in his chamber, he whiles away the hours over a volume of "light literature," a cigar, and a cup of coffee.

Upon one of these occasions, after dining at his club—the University—and, being rather bored by a pedantic country parson, he sought the solitude of his chambers, lighted his cigar, and searched his library for a volume over which he might luxuriate, until the clock, which regulates the movements of the members of Lincoln's Inn, should warn him of the arrival of midnight. He took down a volume of Shakspeare, and, in turning over the pages to select a passage to commence with, something fell upon the floor from between the leaves. He stooped to pick it up, and, after examining it carelessly for a few minutes, and wondering what it could be, and how it came there, a thorn upon a small withered branch of the wild rose-tree pierced his finger. The book and cigar were laid down, and for nearly three hours Horace sat back in his chair, thinking upon Agnes Field—for she had given him that very rose-branch in one of their walks down Merton Lane, and begged him to preserve it for her sake. The contraction of his brow, and the frequent agonized clenching of his hands, showed that his thoughts were any thing but agreeable. After an apparent struggle with himself, carefully replacing the withered branch, he rose and spoke aloud, as if to confirm himself in some resolution he had formed, and said, "I will do it—I am in

independent circumstances, and have no one to control me ; it is but an act of justice—it shall be done.”

On the following day an advertisement to this effect appeared in the public newspapers.

“If Ephraim Field, formerly of the city of Oxford, tailor, and his daughter Agnes, will apply either personally or by letter, at No. 19, Stone Buildings, Lincoln’s Inn, they will hear of something to their advantage.”

As no application was made in answer to this advertisement, Horace wrote to Geoffrey Sewtlight, begging him, if he knew any thing of Miss Field and her father, to acquaint him with their present residence. To this he received an answer from Mrs. Sewtlight, stating that her husband had been dead three years, and had carried the secret of Field’s place of residence with him to the grave. He next wrote to Merton, to old Ephraim Field—forgetting the number of years that had elapsed since he had seen him a very old man. His letter was returned by the post-master, enclosed in an envelope, wherein were a few words to say that Ephraim had been long since dead, and that none of the family lived at Merton, or in the neighbourhood.

Horace gave up the search in despair, and devoted himself more earnestly than ever to the law, and to that “gentlemanly vice,” the accumulation of money.

The summer assizes approached, and a brief, with a retainer, had been sent up to him a few days before the time arrived for his starting on his journey. The cause was one which excited a great sensation in Devonshire, where a murder had been committed under very mysterious circumstances.

The facts as stated in his brief were these. A widow-woman, who kept a small public-house in a village a few miles from Exeter, was found one day early in the morning by her own daughter, a child of ten years of age, lying upon the ground in the taproom, with her head nearly severed from her body. Her pocket had been cut from her side, and the cupboard in which she usually kept her little earnings had been forced open and robbed. The little girl went to bed the night before about nine o’clock, leaving her mother up with two labouring men. She fell asleep as soon as she was in bed, and did not wake until five o’clock the next morning ; when, finding that her mother, who always slept with her, had not been to bed, she got up and went down in search of her.

There were no signs of a forcible entrance having been made, nor was there any instrument found with which the deed could have been committed. The body was found lying on its face near the fender, as if it had fallen from the chair that was still standing directly opposite the fire, and in which Mrs. Crawford—the mur-

dered woman—was in the habit of sitting to curl her hair after her customers had left the house.

Suspicion naturally fell on a young man, a gentleman, the son of a widowed lady who lived in the "great house," as a small and old manor-house was called, just outside the village. He was an only child of his mother, and quite spoilt. His wild and refractory conduct had often led him into serious scrapes. He was a frequenter of races, cock and man fights, baited bulls and badgers, sung an admirable song, and even went upon the stage, and was successful in such characters as *Crack* in the "Turnpike Gate." His mother, who was always an invalid, was seriously alarmed and worried by his disreputable proceedings, though she fortunately knew not the extent to which his dissipations were carried.

George Templeton, for such was the name of the youth, had slept at Mrs. Crawford's on the night of the murder, after returning home late from a fair in the neighbourhood. This he was frequently in the habit of doing, rather than disturb his mother, and expose himself to her remonstrances against his keeping late hours. He had been rather intoxicated over night; and, as he said, found the front door of the house open, and went up stairs without seeing any body, and lay down on the bed without taking off his clothes.

In this state he was found by the neighbours, who were summoned by the little girl, as soon as she had discovered the body of her mother. A neighbouring magistrate, who knew the lad, and the bad character he bore, ordered him into custody, and told the constables to search him. Nothing was found upon him to raise a suspicion against him, besides an old eastern coin, which Mary Crawford declared had belonged to her mother. This George Templeton allowed, but said that Mrs. Crawford had sold it to him a few days before.

The ground about the house was examined, and as it had rained—as it *always* does in Devonshire—the night previous to the murder, among the prints of nailed shoes were found many marks leading to and from the door of Mrs. Crawford's cottage, corresponding exactly with the boots which George Templeton wore.!

He accounted for it by saying that he had tied his pony to the gate, and after ascertaining that he could gain admittance to his bedroom, had returned and turned the pony into the little shed, which stood near the gate where it was found, saddled and bridled, and tied up to the rack.

A search was of course made for the pocket of Mrs. Crawford, and for an instrument wherewith the deed could have been effected. For a long time this search proved vain, but at last the apron, with a stone and a large clasp-knife inside it, was found in a neighbouring pool of thick, dirty slush, which ran from the dungmizen.

In the same pool were discovered a pair of dogskin riding-gloves, covered with blood and filled with pebbles, for the purpose of sinking them. These gloves George confessed belonged to him, but declared that to the best of his belief he had lost them at the neighbouring fair, but that he was too much intoxicated to recollect what he did with them. Under these very suspicious circumstances he was committed to Exeter gaol, on the coroner's warrant, to take his trial for the murder at the ensuing assizes.

The two labouring men clearly proved, by several witnesses, that they had left the public together, and gone straight to their own homes before ten o'clock; after which hour Mrs. Crawford had been seen at her door, and spoken to by several persons.

The newspapers, of course, were full of this dreadful transaction for some weeks previous to the trial, and very charitably, as is their wont, took upon themselves the offices of judge and jury pronounced George guilty, and sentenced him to death. Every little lark he had been engaged in was magnified into some grave offence, which showed a predilection for the shedding of human blood. He was accused of having killed his father by his bad conduct and violent temper, and of having driven his mother mad. But all that is *comme à l'ordinaire*, and sells a paper.

On entering the court on the morning of the trial, Horace, of course, found it excessively crowded, especially by ladies, who, strange to say, like to have their sensibilities tickled by scenes, from which one would think their tender natures would suggest to them the propriety of absenting themselves. When the prisoner appeared at the bar, which he did in a plain suit of black clothes, looking like a handsome man and a gentleman, as he might have been, the application of various scent-bottles to the noses, and worked handkerchiefs to the eyes of the fair auditors, proclaimed plainly that they all thought it was a great pity that so fine a young man should have condescended to become a murderer.

"How say you, George Templeton," inquired the clerk of the arraigns, "are you guilty or not guilty of this murder wherewith you stand charged?"

"Not guilty," replied the prisoner, in tones so firm but melodious, that Horace involuntarily turned to gaze upon him.

After his junior had opened the case for the prosecution, Horace, in a calm, quiet, but clear manner, stated the facts to the jury, examined his witnesses, and sat down.

The counsel who defended the prisoner had but little to do except to call witnesses to character. Several respectable persons appeared in his behalf, and gave him a good character for liberality, generosity, and kindness of heart; but all of them allowed him to be wild, thoughtless, extravagant, and a constant frequenter of bull-baits and fights, which the learned judge who presided at the trial

thought amounted almost to as great a crime as the one with which he stood charged.

The prisoner declined saying any thing in his defence, but merely said, in a calm, unfaltering voice, "I am perfectly innocent, my lord, of the crime imputed to me ; but circumstances are against me, and I must rely on time to clear my character."

The judge summed up, and the jury, without leaving the box, returned a verdict of "Guilty."

No sooner had the verdict been given, than a shriek most piercing filled the court, and struck horror into every breast. The prisoner, who had heard his doom without a change of feature, or variation of colour, sprang to the front of the bar, and leapt over into the body of the court, crying, "My mother! my mother! I have killed my mother!" The whole assembly rose in confusion. In vain the judge and the officers of the court endeavoured to restore order. Every one was anxious to gain a sight of the culprit's parent, and was determined to gratify his or her anxiety. The gaolers however came round, and seizing George Templeton, forcibly dragged him back to the dock. Horace—who, with others, had rushed towards the lady when her son was dragged from her, anxious to render her all the assistance in their power—helped to carry her out of court. Her bonnet and veil were removed, and the cool air seemed partially to revive her. "Water!" cried Horace; and when he had applied it to her lips, the glass fell from his hand, for as soon as consciousness returned to the lady she whispered in his ear, as he hung over her, "HORACE HARDYMAN, YOU HAVE HANGED OUR SON."

The execution took place on the following Monday, and George died protesting his innocence of the murder, though he owned he deserved his fate, for his wicked and thoughtless conduct towards the best of mothers.

"I never felt the controlling hand of a father," he said to the clergyman who attended him, "and to the kind but mistaken indulgence of my widowed mother I owe it that I am what I am, a convicted felon."

Horace Hardyman, who in the horrid whisper recognized the tones of Agnes Field, and knew her by her eyes, the moment they were turned upon him, was carried senseless to his lodgings. After several weeks of severe illness he recovered, to find his wife, as he would gladly have made her, a lunatic, and his child hanged on the gibbet.

He requested that the servant who had attended on Mrs. Templeton might be summoned to him as soon as he was sufficiently recovered. In her he discovered an aunt of Agnes—the youngest child of old Ephraim Field, and the sister of Ephraim the younger. From her he learnt that Agnes and her father, to whom she revealed

her pregnancy, had agreed to leave Oxford, dreading the pointed finger of scorn. They only made known their plans to Geoffrey Sewtlight and herself, whom they bound by a strong oath not to betray their place of residence under any circumstances.

They assumed the name of Tomkins, and Agnes that of Templeton, under which she passed herself off as the widow of an officer who had died abroad. Ephraim died soon after the birth of the infant; and Agnes, after moving from place to place, finally settled in the old manor-house, in the village where the murder was committed.

Horace, after the death of Agnes, which took place about a year after her son's execution, returned from France, whither he had retired, after giving up his business and disposing of his chambers, hired the old manor-house himself, and there led a life of solitude. Excepting to old Martha Field, he spoke to no one. To her he was kind, but never communicative. He gave largely to the poor through her agency, but declined all intercourse with mankind.

The only ray, and a bright one it was, that beamed on his latter years, was the confession upon his deathbed of one of the two labourers who had been drinking at Mrs. Crawford's on the night before the murder was discovered, that he was the guilty party. He had stolen silently from his cottage, after he had entered it with his companion, and seeing George go into the house, followed him. He saw him reel through the outer room and drop his gloves at the stair-foot. The thought struck him that he would murder Mrs. Crawford for the sake of the money that he had seen her deposit in the cupboard, as the blame would doubtless be laid upon George Templeton. How this plan succeeded has been seen. He cut her throat as he stood behind her, with the knife that was found in her pocket, which was lying on the table by her side, having put on George's gloves to keep the blood-stains from his hands. He then sunk all of them in the pond, and returned to his cottage, unseen by any one.

A small marble tablet affixed to the lowly walls of—Church, near Exeter, may still be seen, on which are engraved the words.—

“INFELIX AGNES.”

## CHAPTER XX.

“Ah, *mong share P.*,” said Mrs. P., closing my last number, “I like that much, it makes one feel so miserably interested and excited. I'm sure the public will like it much better than all the larks and nonsense of the young men. Why don't you try something

else, *key song fore ler romong*—something sentimental—like Abelard and Eloise?"

"What college was they hof?" inquired Dusterly; "hi never was hacquainted with hany gentleman with sich very queer names, and hi've knowed Hoxford for some years."

"Those unfortunate persons," said Mrs. P., were a French gentleman and lady, as was very unfortunate in their flirtations, *doo among miserables*."

"Hi don't think the miserables disactly suits my friend Peter," said Dusterly; "he's hof too sanguinary ha temperature, and does better hin the funnies."

"Yes," said Broome, "I'm all for a little fun. 'Begone dull care,' was always my favourite song. The last story was all very well, just by way of a change, like a glass of cider, instead of strong beer, on a hot summer's day, or a day's fishing in 'the long,' after working hard all term-time."

"Yes," said I, "you're right, my friends; I ought to have adhered rigidly to the *qualis ab incepto*, and been satisfied with amusing my friends, without attempting the pathetics. I must not return to that 'strain again,' but try and excite their risibilities as was my wont."

"Oh!" said Mrs. P., "there's no doubt you can make people laugh—any other fool can do that—*may voo ler cootay tro gra*."

I was about to prove my metal, by returning iron-ical thanks to Mrs. P. for the compliment she had been pleased to pay me, when my boy, Nicomedes, interrupted me, with a very dirty face, and a message from the Bursar, that he wished to see me immediately. I put on my coat—for we had been enjoying a pipe in the arbour in our shirt-sleeves—and hurried down to college.

"Peter," said the Bursar, "I have just been reading your little story about Agnes Field, and although I do not mean to say you have not done justice to your tale, I think such fables are better avoided. You profess to write especially for the entertainment of your University friends and patrons, and you ought not to try and rouse the sensibilities of those who, by their college vows, are debarred the pleasure of exciting the sympathies of the fair sex. It's cruel, Peter, and I hate cruelty to man, woman, or beast."

"It was written, sir," said I, apologetically, "expressly for the ladies, and I have always found that they like to have their sensibilities excited by sentimentals."

"Well, never mind, Peter," continued the Bursar, "*I* think it cruel, and cruelty I dislike. Open that basket, Peter, and you will find a very fine eel in it. The buttery-boy caught it last night with a night-line—he'll be punished for poaching some day or other—and as it's a fine, lively eel, I should like to have it spitch-cocked.

Eels, however, have not agreed with me lately, and in M. Ude's treatise on cookery I have discovered the reason. He says there is an empyreumatic oil just under the pellicle, which is offensive to the stomach, and recommends their being tied to a spit, and roasted before they are killed. Now, Peter, I can trust you to take that very fine eel and roast him while animation remains in him, until, by running a knife gently along his back, the skin will open sufficiently to allow the noxious oil to escape. To prevent the poor thing's suffering too much, you can kill him before he is *fried*. I can't trust Coquus, he has a heavy hand, and instead of merely tickling an oyster to induce him to open his shell, he murders him outright, and one loses the delicious sensation of feeling his dying struggles—which are merely muscular, you know—as he is gliding gently down one's throat. Take the eel, Peter, cook him thoroughly, and treat him tenderly."

"Without rousing his sensibilities, you mean, sir, I presume?"

"Certainly, Peter, it's cruel, and I hate cruelty in any shape."

In spite of these remarks of the Bursar, whose authority I never dispute, about the cruelty of rousing sensibilities and exciting sympathies, by narrating sentimental stories, I must relate a melancholy occurrence which happened to one of our gentlemen, even if I have sentence of cruelty passed upon me for recording it. I shall call it

#### THE DUEL IN PORT MEADOW.

Mr. and Mrs. "liberal and discerning public," allow me to introduce you to Mr. Straddle and Mr. Blowhard both gentlemen, and gentlemen-commoners of St. Peter's College, Oxford. They are, you will observe, sitting in their dressing-gowns, for it is a warm summer's evening, eating Wytham strawberries and drinking their claret; drinking, mind, not sipping it, for both are fond of Lafitte, and neither of them is addicted to the "total abstinence" system.

"Come, Straddle," said Blowhard, "help yourself and pass the bottle. You seem melancholy, man, what ails you?"

"You can't wonder at it, my dear fellow," said Straddle, sighing and filling his glass, "when you consider under what deplorable circumstances I am growing old."

"Ha! ha! growing old indeed? that's rather too good; to talk of growing old at six and twenty."

"Eight and twenty, eight and twenty, on my honour, Blowhard. I entered the army at sixteen, and, after serving six years as an ensign in a marching regiment, my well-meaning friends suddenly advised me to 'exchange' all my hopes of a gory bed upon some 'well-foughten field' for the family incumbency of Plumstead,



likely to be vacated by that sound but apoplectic divine, my maternal uncle, Philoneicus Polemic."

"And a very good exchange, too," said Blowhard. "No chance of getting on in the army in these piping times of peace, without purchase, unless, indeed, you can boast of a commander-in-chief for your godfather."

"Very true," continued Straddle, "but here have I been four years resident in Oxford, and what have I got by it?"

"Got? Why you have got—into debt, haven't you?"

"True again. That's easily got, any where, but beyond that I cannot even get my *testamur* for my little-go, though I've been up three times for it."

"Why, you've only been plucked once."

"No, but I bolted twice, and that's very nearly as disreputable, and quite as unsatisfactory. How they could expect that I, who never relished grammar at fourteen, could take to it at four and twenty, I cannot conceive. I hate college."

"Well, never mind, old fellow," said Blowhard, "you can't hate it worse than I do. I always wished to go to sea, but my father, the admiral, said I had not brains enough for a powder-monkey, and was only fit for a parson. So here I am, with the pleasing prospect before me of getting a chaplaincy on board a man-of-war, and being sent down into the cockpit to help the surgeon, instead of fighting on the quarter-deck."

"It's a regular bore, certainly," said Straddle, "but come, I'll give you a toast—here's confusion to all misjudging paternities."

Just as Mr. Straddle was raising his bumper to his lips, a single rap at his room-door induced him to set it down again and dash into his bedroom.

"Come in," said Blowhard.

"Is Mr. Straddle at home, sir?" said Finedraw, the tailor, just poking his nose into the room.

"No, he is not," said Blowhard, "what do you want?"

"Just brought home three new coats, four pair summer trousers, and—and—and—his little account, sir."

"You'd better leave them, Finedraw, and call again, he's not in now."

"Beg pardon, Mr. Blowhard, but I rather *think* he must be in," said Finedraw, pointing to the full glass opposite the empty chair, "and I've a very large bill—"

"Think, sir! do you mean to say you think I'm telling you a lie, sir! leave the clothes and the room!"

Mr. Finedraw made a low bow and did as he was desired—for he was used to it.

"There," said Straddle, "that comes of being waited on by a young scout—the old ones 'sport oak' by instinct. If Peter can't

wait on me himself, I must hire a private tiger. I hate being dunned."

"Why don't you pay every term, then," said Blowhard, "it's much the best plan."

"Decidedly," said Straddle, "when you've got the tin to do it with, which I haven't."

"Why run in debt then?"

"How can I avoid it when the fellows are so polite and pressing for my custom? If I order a coat, the fellow persuades me that I want two at least; and it was only the other day that I ordered six wash leather waistcoats of old Quarterman, and he sent me in three dozen."

"Why didn't you return them then?"

"Oh! that's too much trouble. Besides, they'll all come in some day or other. I've boots enough to last me my life. Heigho! it's a nuisance being dunned perpetually. I've serious thoughts of paying off my ticks soon, though."

"Any chance of a legacy then? or is the governor rickety?" inquired Blowhard.

"No, no, my dear fellow, no such luck. I mean to sacrifice myself to the interests of my duns by marrying a middle-aged woman with an immensity of pewter," answered Straddle, opening another bottle of Lafitte.

"Capital claret," said Blowhard, inhaling the bouquet, "what do you give a dozen?"

"I really haven't the most distant idea. Scott sends it in, and I drink it. I suppose I shall know some day or other. It is *very* good, and when I'm married I'll take all he has left, and pay ready money for it."

"Who is the lady? Name her, and we'll drink her health, wishing her luck with her bargain."

"That," said Straddle, "I can't do, as I'm still upon the look out. There must be many women thought about, who would not sneeze at such a figure as mine, though I'm rather inclined to be stout."

Mr. Straddle displayed an excess of modesty in thus describing his personal appearance. He was fat—very fat—though tall withal, and it was whispered among his companions in arms that he left the army because he used to perspire violently on parade.

"Well," said Blowhard, "as you're a good sort of fellow, and would make a liberal use of your money if you had it, I think I can give you a wrinkle."

"What, in some old woman's face?"

"Not so very old. Under five and forty I should guess, and not so bad-looking, when you see her behind."

"Never mind her looks so as she has lots of tin," said Straddle.

"Who is she? Not a widow, I hope, as they are up to too many dodges for me. Catch a weazle asleep, eh?"

"You know the freshman that came up the other day?" inquired Blowhard.

"Why we have had three raw recruits this term," said Straddle.

"I mean the man who, as you army men would say, 'joined,' or, as my nautical dad would express it, 'came on board, last. The little, thin, slim, and trim gentleman-commoner who combs his hair down each side of his face, and wears his shirt-collar turned down to look poetical."

"Well, you don't want me to do the matrimonial with him, I suppose," said Straddle, laughing.

"No, certainly not," continued Blowhard, "but he has brought up a tame aunt with him, who is deputed by his mother, who is in India, to look after him during his campaign in college—to see that he combs his hair, cleans his teeth, and don't drink more than two glasses of wine, I suppose. This female secretary of the home department, who is called Miss Violetta Jilks, has, I am informed, 3000*l.* a year in her own right, which will all go, if she die unmarried, to this nice-looking nephew, Mr. Byron Scott Montgomery Jilks."

"How do you know all this?" inquired Straddle, beginning to look much interested.

"Oh! Peter's my informant," said Blowhard, "he knows every thing, and has doubtless administered a quantum suff of strong ale to her groom—a staid, stiff, old buffer in skyblue livery—and pumped him of all particulars."

"Do you know Jilks, old fellow?" asked Straddle.

"No, but I'll call on him to-morrow morning."

"Do so. And now for one more bottle to drink a short life and a merry husband to Miss Violetta Jilks."

The fresh bottle was floored, or, as Straddle expressed it, another "Frenchman was killed;" and after a harmless supper of lobster-salad, and dressed crab, half a dozen cigars, with corresponding "colds without," the parties parted for the night. Straddle went to bed, and was tormented with the nightmare in the form of Miss Violetta Jilks; and Blowhard haunted by the effeminate looks of her poetically-dressed nephew, Byron Scott Montgomery Jilks.

On the following morning, after lectures, Blowhard watched Mr. Jilks to his rooms, and proceeded to make a formal call. He found him reclining gracefully on his sofa, dressed in an elegant silk reading-gown, with a guitar suspended to his neck by a broad scarlet ribbon. As if ashamed of being caught in the fact of playing Troubadour, Jilks struck a hasty chord, and divested himself of the instrument, which he deposited carefully on a new "horizontal grand" pianoforte.

Blowhard introduced himself, talked a little Oxford chit-chat, which seemed as mysterious as the "unknown tongue" to Jilks, who merely did his part of the dialogue by looking choky, and nodding like a mandarin. He concluded his visit by inviting him to wine with him after dinner.

Jilks seemed equally afraid of saying yes or no, and murmured something about never drinking wine, and of *teaing* with his aunt. Blowhard insisted on his accepting the invitation, and told him he might drink as little as he pleased, and imbibe twankay with his relative afterwards.

As soon as Blowhard had left his rooms, Jilks was very much frightened at having given his consent to go to a wine-party without consulting his aunt. He wished to go, however, as he found it rather stupid playing duets every evening at the tea-table and pianoforte. He therefore sat down and told her, in a perfumed note, that his tutor required his attendance at lecture all that evening.

This, for so young a man, showed great inventive powers, and gave great hopes of his one day or other being able to divest himself of what he called "the despotic chains of female tyrannical thralldom."

He went to Mr. Blowhard's, and was introduced to Mr. Straddle in due form. Mr. Blowhard apologized for not asking a party to meet him, alleging in excuse, that he fancied he might prefer a quiet to a noisy evening. Jilks assented, and was really glad that he had not to face a large party of strangers.

He drank a few glasses of claret, and as it was *only* claret, and exceedingly good claret, and he was not pressed to fill his glass every time, he went on imbibing until his tongue began to run. Being properly "drawn" by his new acquaintances, he became very communicative, and let them know his decided talents for music and poetry; and what was more to their purpose, the exact amount of his present income or allowance, and his brilliant expectations from his aunt Violetta.

Both Blowhard and Straddle were suddenly smitten with a strong attachment for the "sister arts," and professed an extraordinary propensity for the society of ladies who were accomplished therein. Jilks was delighted at their manifest similarity of tastes with his own, and volunteered to introduce them to his aunt as early as it might be convenient for that lady to receive them.

Having thus accomplished what they aimed at, they dismissed him that he might go to his aunt's to tea, and while sufficiently warmed with wine, without being in the least intoxicated, might expatiate to her upon their social and moral virtues with greater energy than he would have done when uninspired by their wine and flattery.

Violetta thought that the lecture her nephew had been receiving

from the college tutor must have been on some very exciting theme, as she had never seen him in such spirits before. He told her, upon her hinting as much, that the lecture was over sooner than he expected, and that he had taken two glasses of very light claret with two of his fellow-pupils before he left college. Miss Violetta was rather alarmed at this, but when Byron Scott Montgomery—for she always addressed and alluded to him by all the names which his godfathers, and she, his godmother, had given him—launched out into an elaborate eulogium upon the gentlemanly looks, dress, and manners of his new acquaintances, and their ardent love of poetry, music, and painting, Miss Violetta's fears were obliterated by feelings of joy, that her nephew had been fortunate enough to fall into the society of such nice young gentlemen.

"My dearest Byron Scott Montgomery!" exclaimed Miss Jilks, clasping her fair hands—which were rather skinny—and turning her eyes up to the ceiling, "what unrivalled felicity you must have experienced in meeting with two such kindred souls! hearts capable of sharing with you the purest and most meditative poetic influences! We must ask the lads to unite with us in a social inhalation of the pure decoction of the seric herb—would they prefer muffins or crumpets, think you?"

"Lads, aunt!" said Jilks, "they're men grown—regular six-footers, and one has been in the army, and the other looks a great deal better suited for 'seeking the bubble reputation at the cannon's mouth,' than for masticating your muffins and crumpets."

"Then we must have some coffee and *chasse*," said Auntie.

"Sandwiches and bottled porter," suggested Jilks.

"Byron Scott Montgomery!" said Miss Violetta, looking cathedrally solemn; "never allude in the most distant manner to the introduction of such vulgarities into my temporary residence! What poetry can there be in porter?"

"As to poetry, I don't know—there's a good deal of puff necessary to make both relish," said Jilks; "and I'm sure neither Straddle nor Blowhard would look so oleaginous as they do, if they had limited themselves to twankay and burnt beans."

"Byron Scott Montgomery! that's slang! never allow your volubility of articulation to induce you to resort to metaphors, suited only to the *embouchure* of the *canaille*. What are the nomenclatures of your *nouveaux amis*?" inquired Miss Jilks; for, to say the truth, her knowledge of French was nearly on a par with Mrs. P.'s.

"Straddle and Blowhard," answered Jilks.

"Give me the *portfeuille*, Byron Scott Montgomery," said Miss Jilks; and when she had received it, she selected a bit of pink paper and wrote two very diminutive notes with a crowquill, and invited Blowhard and Straddle to tea on the following evening at

nine o'clock. In the lower corner of each was written "music and conversation," as a hint to them not to expect cards or supper.

Miss Jilks then compelled her nephew to *do* two or three little duets, and sent him into college with her groom to put him to bed.

Before I proceed further with my *historiette*, as she herself would have called it, it will be necessary to give the reader some little insight into the birth, parentage, and education of Miss Jilks.

Miss Violetta Jilks and her elder sister were the daughters and only children of Mr. Exsuperius Jilks, a respectable banker and man's mercer in a small country town. Their mother died while they were yet infants, and their father, to get them out of the way, that they might not interfere with the computation of compound and simple interest, sent them at an early age to, and left them entirely to the care and management of, a lady who kept a "respectable seminary for young ladies." There they learnt a smattering of a few things, which would be most likely useless to them in after life, and were taught to despise the acquirement of the humbler arts of making their own clothes, and darning their own stockings, as "unbecoming of young ladies of great expectations."

The elder, Miss Jilks, who delighted in the name of Euphrasia, was, at the sweet age of sixteen, found wanting one fine summer's morning, and, when discovered, introduced herself to her indignant father as Mrs. Jilks, having gained that matronly title by a marriage with her first cousin, who was junior clerk in the banking concern.

The elder Jilks refused to receive them under his paternal roof for some time, but pardoned them at the instigation of the member for the borough, who, to repay many little favours he had received from the hands of the principal inhabitant and most influential voter in the place, obtained for the young man a civil appointment in the service of the H. E. I. C. Ere they sailed "for Madras and Calcutta, touching at Ceylon," Mrs. Jilks gave birth to our hero, and wisely preferred leaving him behind her to be educated under her sister's eye, to exposing him to sea-sickness and other miseries attendant on a voyage to the East.

Shortly after Jilks and his wife sailed, old Jilks met with an accident, which, after some weeks of great suffering, caused his death. He sat, on market-days, at the receipt of custom on a very high stool, to make his customers fancy he was standing to receive them and their deposits.

One day he had occasion to rise from this stool to make a low bow to a lady, who always left a large sum in his hands without requiring interest for it, and, before he could sit down again, one of the clerks, as he said, on purpose, moved the stool away, and Mr. Jilks fell heavily upon the ground and injured his spine. He made a will, leaving all his property to his younger daughter and to

his grandson, Byron Scott Montgomery, after her, in case she should die unmarried, or without issue. This he did, not from any resentment he felt towards his elder child, but because he believed her husband was "well-placed," and fully qualified for realizing a large fortune in India. His business and the premises he left to his old and faithful head-clerk and foreman. Thus died Mr. Jilks, senior.

Miss Violetta took a small house in her native borough, and retained her deceased father's man-of-all-work, Timothy Thornback, in her service. This worthy and faithful creature, with a steady housekeeper, and a hop-about sort of girl, constituted her establishment.

Byron Scott Montgomery was waited on daily by one of the curates of one of the town churches, who gladly added to his inadequate salary by doing a bit of classics and mathematics four hours daily, at seven shillings per diem. In the elegances and moralities, writing, cyphering, poetry, painting, music, the *belles lettres*, philosophy, chemistry, botany, metaphysics, astronomy, and the use of the globes, she did for him herself, as she felt herself fully qualified to do for him—and in doing for him she fully succeeded.

I regret to state for the honour of the clergy generally, and the parsons of the borough of—in particular, that Miss Jilks was obliged to decline the services of three curates in succession for making boisterous love to her, on account, as she justly suspected, of her pecuniary resources. Had they managed matters a little more quietly, Miss Jilks might probably have been the Reverend Mrs. Somebody, and Byron Scott Montgomery Jilks a very different being to what he was, when, under his aunt's eyes and auspices, he came up to reside at St. Peter's.

At it was, Jilks was a regular muff, and so Timothy plainly told him; because, in mounting his pony, he always made a point of getting up on the wrong—and, strange to say, that is the *right*—side. Violetta, who looked like a forced specimen of an elongated Lombardy poplar, was aware that her figure showed itself off to the greatest advantage on horseback; she, therefore, judiciously cultivated equestrian exercises, and tried to stimulate her nephew to excel in the manly science; but her efforts were vain. Byron Scott Montgomery, to her and Timothy's great disgust, would sit with his knees out, his toes in, his heels up, and his bridle-hand only two inches from his nose; and, for fear his face should be too far from the pommel of the saddle, he obligingly compelled his body to adopt a forward angle of forty-five degrees to lessen the distance between them. Jilks was a brute, there's no denying it—and, as a proof of my assertion, aunt Violetta allowed him a pound a week pocket-money when he came up to Oxford, and he did not know how to spend it.

Return we, or which is more grammatical, let us return to Messrs. Straddle and Blowhard.

As these gentlemen were sitting at breakfast on the morning following the bamboozlement of Jilks, a double rap at the closed oak induced the former to peep through the keyhole, and, upon seeing a sky-blue livery, he opened the door without any trepidation, and begged Timothy Thornback to come in.

"Be these one Muster Stroddle's partiments, plase 'e sir?" said Tim, taking off his hat, and searching for something underneath the lining-leather of it.

"My name is Straddle," said the owner of it, laying a great stress on the *a*.

"Then I be got note for thee—here un be, mon, and here's 'nother for t'other chap, Muster Blowhard; know where a can find he, wonder?"

"Oh!" said Straddle, "you are Miss Jilks's man. Pray, walk in—Mr. Blowhard is here, in my rooms."

Tim obeyed, and, thrusting both the billets into Straddle's hand, stepped into the room, and took his station on the mat near the door, wondering and feeling rather frightened at the cautious manner with which Straddle closed the oak behind him.

When the gentlemen had read their notes and winked at one another, without being seen by Tim, who was amusing himself by examining the heterogeneous contents of a college room, Straddle asked him what he would take to drink.

"Oh!" replied Tim, "arn't at all 'tickler, sir, any think like as you may happen to ha' by yer."

"Open that bookcase," said Straddle, "and you'll see some brandy."

"Where be I to get glass to drink em out on?"

"Put the bottle to your mouth, old boy, and pull away," said Blowhard.

"I 'ool," said Tim; he did, and after rubbing the neck of the bottle with his coat sleeve, jammed the cork in, and replaced the bottle.

While Tim was thus engaged, Blowhard was requested by Straddle, who hated any trouble, to return a written acceptance of the invite in their joint names, while he proceeded to pump Tim.

"Very good brandy that, eh? Mr.—What's your name?"

"Timothy, sir—calls me Tim—and all's one to I. 'Tis capital brandy. Rather moreish though. Ha! ha! ha!"

"Try him again, Tim."

"I 'ool," said Tim, and he did, and smacked his lips approvingly.

"Very nice lady your mistress, Tim, eh?"

"Out of the way nice," said Tim, "she knows nothin' bout horses, and lets I buy, swop, and sell 'em for she. Then she never



'quires 'bout price o' oats, beyans, hay, nor stra, saddles, bridles, sponges, brushes, clothes, nor physic—she is a out o' the way nice 'ooman and a man's a nass as wouldn't sakeryfice some o' his comforts to live with one sich."

"Try one more sip of brandy, Tim."

"I 'ool," said Tim, and he did.

"You must have a snug place of it, Tim, eh?"

"Snuggerer nor not," said Tim, "and so I did ought. Five and forty of the very best years of my vallyble 'xistence have been 'voted to their service. I was errand-boy, shop-boy, boot, shoe, and knife-boy; looked after nags, milked cows, waited at meals, shut up shop, seed all safe a' nights, and slept in the cellar, and all for four-pund-ten a year and my grub, and never had no vails nor perkisits. Things is altered now, and I'se content."

"Take one more sip, Tim."

"I 'ool," said Tim, and he did.

"How do you like your young master, Tim?" said Blowhard, holding out the note he had written in answer to the invite.

"He?—he's a nass," said Tim, snatching the note. "Hope there's another letter in a day or tow coming to you gentlemen—happy to bring it—capital brandy—finished the bottle—hope there's more in the cupboard—eh?"

"Plenty," said Straddle. "If not, there's lots more at Scott's. Shut the door after you, Tim; and if you meet any body that asks after me, say I'm not at home."

"I 'ool, sir," said Tim, winking, and he did so to no less than three tailors, two bootmakers, one pastrycook, and a bookseller, all of whom met him on the stairs, with their "little bills" in their hands.

"Timothy, my Fidelio," said Miss Jilks to him, when he brought back the note, "did you behold the inscribers of this epistle?"

"Seed two o' the nicest young chaps as I've not clapp'd eyes on for some time, mum," said Tim, "two o' the pur-litest and generouset gen'lemen as can't possible be, and I never—(tasted such good brandy he was going to say)—shan't feel no way back'ard in 'veying another note to 'em agin, 'even in middle o' night.'"

Thus was Miss Violetta prejudiced in favour of Straddle and Blowhard, by the favourable representations of her only favourites, Byron Scott Montgomery and Timothy Thornback.

"Blowhard, old fellow," said Straddle, when Tim had vacated, "what does she mean by 'music and conversation,' eh?"

"Why, tea, thrumming, twaddle, and turn out, I suppose," replied Blowhard.

"But suppose she gets on about musicians, painters, and poets, what the deuce are we to do? I never was introduced to any performers in those lines in my life."

"Oh! you can just nod your head and look knowing, and leave her to do the talking part herself."

"No, that won't do," said Straddle, "she may ask a straightforward question and find out the imposition at once."

"Set her down to singing then," said Blowhard, "and keep her at it all the evening, she can't sing and talk too."

"She may between the heats. Besides, I want to come the amorous while you keep young Jilks to the piano. I'll tell you what we'll do—send out for a biographical dictionary, and get up the names, dates, and styles of the principal professionals."

I, Peter Priggins, procured the book on tick, and the young men worked hard at it all day, at least Blowhard did—Straddle found it too much trouble.

In the evening, after qualifying themselves with claret, and paying peculiar attention to their dress, which they took especial care should be in the quiet and philosophical style, they presented themselves at the door of Miss Jilks's lodgings, and were admitted and properly ushered in by Tim.

During tea-time, and in the presence of Tim, who waited, the conversation was confined to general subjects, but, when Tim and the tea-things vanished, Straddle boldly launched out into what he impudently and imprudently called his favourite subject, the fine arts, and, after making two or three very bad shots, begged and entreated of Miss Jilks to favour him with one of her favourite airs.

Miss Jilks blushed, but began denuding her fingers and long arms of her long gloves, and inquired, "Do you love Mozart, Mr. Straddle?"

"To distraction, madam—to madness, though I cannot but say that in my earlier days I preferred the symphonies of Murillo, and the canzonets of Claude Loraine," said Straddle, looking amorous and enthusiastic.

Miss Jilks stared, and thought something was wrong, but was not quite certain, so she went to the piano, and Straddle stood behind her begging her to nod when he should turn over, as he was rather short-sighted. Blowhard crammed the greater portion of a white muslin handkerchief into his mouth to prevent his laughing.

Miss Jilks sang, "Ah! Perdona," in a very languishing manner, while Straddle nodded his noddle between the bars, pretending to keep time, and sighed profoundly in the pauses.

"Beautiful! sublime! heavenly!" cried Straddle, when she had finished. "I have not the slightest hesitation in asserting that neither Metastasio, Melancthon, or Moliere could have sung that air, Maestros di Capelli as they were, with half the correctness that you have done, Miss Jilks."

"Really, sir, you are too complimentary," replied Miss Jilks, looking excessively pleased.

"Permit your nephew, madam, to favour us while we sit and listen. Jilks, oblige me with an air from Racine or Tasso."

"We haven't a copy, have we, aunt?" said Jilks.

"I fear not," said Violetta.

"Never mind," said Straddle, "one of the simple melodies of Carlo Dolce, or Canaletti, or any other master you please, will do as well."

"How kind you are," said Violetta. "Before he commences singing, tell me, Mr. Straddle, does not my nephew's face remind you of the busts of some of our most eminent poets?"

"The astonishing resemblance made me anxious to make his acquaintance, and that of his fair aunt's, the moment I beheld him," said Straddle, throwing a gleam of intense admiration from his grey eyes.

"You're fond of poetry, Mr. Straddle?"

"Excuse me, madam, I am not *fond* of poetry," said Straddle, "I *dote* on it. I breathe and live upon it. There is not a poet, I may venture to say, from Wouverbans to Sir Geoffrey Wyattville, whose works I have not devoured."

"What a memory you have!" said Miss Jilks. "Favour me with one or two of your favourite passages."

"Excuse me," said Straddle, "I have a bad memory. I recollect the sentiments, the—the—the ideas—the notions—the—the glorious emanations and scintillations of my author—but I cannot remember the intoxicating verbalities wherewith he clothes them. Besides, we are keeping Mr. Jilks waiting."

"Oh! never mind, Mr. Straddle, *do, do* favour me," said Violetta.

"I assure you, madam, such is the treachery of my memory even in names—simple as *they* are, that I once attributed a very fine Dutch picture of humble life, painted by the celebrated Wilkie to Teniers—I did, indeed, madam," said Straddle, perspiring violently, and looking to Blowhard for support.

"Strike up, Jilks," said Blowhard, "now it's calm."

Jilks sung "*Batti, Batti*," very badly, but both Straddle and his friend applauded him loudly, and then the former, for fear of getting involved again in poetics, prepared for a duet, then another solo, and another duet, until the time came for saying adieu, which he did in pathetic tones, and with a rather hard squeeze of Miss Violetta's fingers.

Miss Jilks rang the bell, and bade Tim bring a little marasquino and curaçoa—but both Straddle and Blowhard positively declined it, asserting that they never touched any thing after tea—particularly spirits—which was true, for they never drank tea.

"You don't indulge, then, in that enticing and intoxicating prac-

tice of inhaling the fumes of the Virginian weed?" inquired Miss Violetta.

"We abhor it," answered Straddle for both, and making a wry face.

"Delightful!" said Miss Jilks—"farewell! *au revoir!*"

"D—d odd," muttered Tim, as he ushered them down stairs, "what made his rooms smell so strong of baccy this morning!—if it warn't Virginny, it was short-cut or returns. Here's summut up, I can see. He don't keep such capital brandy for nothing."

"Jilks," said Straddle, forgetting himself, "you may as well come to my rooms, and have a cigar and a little brandy and water before you go to bed."

"Why, I thought you told my aunt you never smoked or touched spirits," said Jilks, "and I wanted to taste the marasquino and curaçoa; they were got on purpose for you, and she won't draw a cork for me."

"You wouldn't be such a soft one," said Blowhard, "as to own to fumigation and night-caps before a lady? Do you never smoke, Jilks?"

"Why," said Byron Scott Montgomery, "I once—only don't tell aunt—I once smoked a bit of cane, but it made me very ill."

"You shall try a mild queen's cigar, a real Havannah, this evening, Jilks, and wash it down with Regent's punch," said Straddle.

"I certainly should like," said Jilks; "but if my aunt was to find it out—"

"How the deuce can she find it out, unless you split upon yourself?" inquired Blowhard.

"I don't know—only there's Timothy, he's got a nose like a wasp's," said Jilks.

"You don't mean to say Tim, my friend Tim, is an informer?" asked Straddle.

"By pursuing a virtuous line of conduct," began Jilks, copy-book fashion, "I prevent—"

"Oh! that's all humbug," said Blowhard.

"Infernal twaddle," said Straddle. "Where does Tim roost?"

"Roost?" said Jilks.

"Yes, where does he sleep?"

"Oh! at the Shirt and Shotbag, where the horses are."

"Then send for him," said Blowhard, "and we'll soon settle Tim. He'll never inform again rely on it."

"Settle! You don't mean murder him?" asked Jilks.

"Oh, no!" said Straddle, "merely give him a quietus in a very harmless way."

"There's no occasion to send for him," said Jilks; "for as soon as he has locked up at home, he always comes down to college to valet me, take my things away to brush, and so on."

Mr. Jilks had scarcely said these words, when Tim knocked, and was admitted at the college gates. Walking up to his young master, he beckoned to him, saying, "Come along and be racked up for the night, Master Byron ancettero," which Tim used as an abbreviation of the two names which he never could remember.

"Blowhard," said Straddle, "take Mr. Jilks to my rooms, and I will be with you immediately." As soon as they were gone, he went up to Tim, who was rather amazed at having his orders disobeyed for the first time, and said to him in low and confidential tones, nudging his elbow at the same time, "Tim—Mr. Jilks is going to smoke a cigar."

"Blessed if a be though!" said Tim. "What a precious mess I—"

"Nonsense, Tim—you wouldn't mind one more glass of that excellent brandy? and then you know you said your master was an ass—it will be capital fun to see him drunk—eh—Tim?"

"Capital!" said Tim; "but then if missus—"

"How can she know if you don't tell her, Tim? and I'm sure you never split!" said Straddle.

"That's according!" said Tim. "Do you smoke?"

"Decidedly," said Straddle. "Half a dozen regalias every night."

"Then how cam ye to tell Miss Vi as ye 'bhorrd it?"

"Politeness, Tim—politeness," said Straddle.

"Gammon!" said Tim, "and I know'd it."

"Never mind, Tim, come along and join us," said Straddle, dragging the unresisting domestic into his rooms, where his master and Blowhard were already "lit up," as they say of illuminations.

"Now, Tim," said Straddle, "shut the outer door, take a seat, and draw up to the table—don't be shy—never mind your master."

"I don't," said Tim, "do I young 'un?"

"Well there now, Tim, there's the brandy, and there's the water, help yourself."

"An you are no dejection," said Tim, "and ba' got any handy, I rather prefers rum o' nights. It's moisterer to the palate, and leaves a sneatch behind it in t' morning."

"Quite right," said Blowhard, "I always drinks the king's allowance—here—I'll help you—there's a regular nor-nor-wester; down with it. Will you have a cigar?"

"No thank 'e," said Tim, when he'd tossed down the grog without the least hesitation, "I never smokes cigars, they're so near one's nose, and mine's red enou' already."

"Well! take another glass of grog, Tim," said Straddle.

"I 'ool," replied Tim, helping himself. "It do strike I," said Tim, looking first at his master and then at Blowhard, "that young *Master* Byron ancettero's pipe don't go over pleasant—look how *precious* pale he's a turning, for all the world as if he'd been a

murdering a turmut, and washing of his face in the blood on him."

Tim was right, for Jilks felt very sick, and would have dropped from his perch if Blowhard and Straddle had not rushed to him, and, supporting him on each side, taken him out of the tobacco atmosphere into the open air.

"Give un to me," said Tim, lifting the almost insensible body of Mr. Byron anceltero upon his shoulder, "I'll put un to snooze and come back and finish t' grog."

"Now, Blowhard," said Straddle, "this is just what I wanted. We must make friends with Tim, get a hold upon him somehow, or my plans with his mistress will fail. It strikes me that Tim is sharp, and knows that if his mistress gets a master, he shall not have to swap and sell the horses, buy the corn, and execute many other commissions, out of which he gets a larger percentage than he ought. We must ply him with liquor, for I don't think a little will sew him up."

"Here's to begin," said Blowhard, as he filled up Tim's half-consumed tumbler with pure rum.

Tim soon returned, and gave a very ludicrous description of his master's miserable condition. The exertions he had made in carrying and putting him to bed seemed to have aided the operation of the rum, for his eyes sparkled, his nose grew redder than usual, and his tongue ran very rapidly. The young men plied him with strong grog, and laughed at his stories, which induced him to tell fresh ones, at which they laughed still louder, and told him he was a "regular brick."

"Ah!" said Tim, suddenly changing his tone from gay to grave, and looking despondingly, "if it warn't for my old 'oman, what a jolly cock I should be!"

"What! your mistress?" said Straddle.

"No, no, bless 'e, no!" said Tim, "my wife—my lawful wedded wife—I don't keep a missus, missus do keep I."

"Oh! you're married then, Tim," said Blowhard.

"'Blessed if I bain't," said Tim, "jined together for life—for better nor worser—for richer nor poorer—till—"

"Got any children—any Timothyculi?" asked Straddle.

"Children!" replied Tim—"blessed if I arn't—nine as fine prodigies as ever you seed, and all on t'm blessed with 'straordinary appetites."

"What! they pull hard upon the wages—eh—Tim?" inquired Blowhard, filling his tumbler.

"Wages, wails, and parkisits hasn't nothing at all to doin wi it," said Tim, "if it warn't for my native 'genuity and 'scrimination, they'd a bin atomies long afore this—I've been obligated

for to shorten the osses' 'lowances many a time to keep 'em fro' starvin."

"Then," said Straddle, "you've a means of your own—a sort of plan for filling the exchequer, I suppose."

"Jist haven't I?" said Tim, recovering his spirits, and winking violently. "Old master didn't promote the idication of the workin classes for nuffin."

"How do you manage then, Tim?" said Blowhard.

"Why, you see," said Tim, thrown off his guard, and deprived of his usual caution and cunning, by the "repetatur haustus"—"my missus is a very 'nevolent Christian—jines the 'vangelicals, and does a 'finity o' good. She's one of the Dorcas s'ciety for 'spensation o' soup, blankets, calico, and 'ligious principles, no end o' sheep's heads and tracks, for broth and private 'tribution, do she buy—leastways I buys for she. She promotes the propogation of infants by keepin of a stock of secondhand babby linen allays ready on the shortest o' notices, and grinding down taters to counterfit hinky ar-rerroot. Never lets the raggedest wag-her-bones go away without relief."

"She's a kind-hearted creature, by Jove!" whispered Straddle to Blowhard; "and I'll bet any odds the rascal makes a nice thing of her."

"She gets imposed upon sometimes, I should think," said Blowhard, winking to his friend, to let him know he understood his meaning.

"She would if it warnt for I," continued Tim; "but charity, says I begins at home—so I allays keep plenty o' small change, and, when she gies I a shilling or sixpence to give to a idle wag-her-bones at the door, I pockets the silver, and 'spenses her 'nevolence in coppers. Then she makes I keep a list o' charitable objicks—I've got one in my pocket now—for she distends her charities wher-ever she goes. There it is—read it," said Tim, pulling out a greasy pocket-book, and extracting a paper, the contents of which were as follows:—

Jeams smith—rumatis . . . . .	2s. 6d.
wider anes—2 babby. . . . .	4s. 6d.
jon rile—leg bruk. . . . .	1s. 0d.
sall tims—wiout a bed. . . . .	2s. 6d.
bill joy—kikken pox. . . . .	1s. 0d.
loosy fox — un'fortin gal. . . . .	5s. 6d.

"There," said Tim, "now you'd hardly think as all those 'dividuals means Mrs. Thornback?"

"What, Jane Smith, Widow Haynes, and the rest of these unfortunates are all—"

"Gammon, every one on 'em," said Tim.

"Come, Tim, you don't drink," said Straddle, placing a bit of folded blank paper into Tim's hand, which he carefully replaced in his pocket-book, and putting the original "list of charitable objects" into his own waistcoat-pocket.

"No more—no more to-night," said Tim, rising and staggering to the door. "Happy to oblige you any other evening—know when I've had enow."

"Well, good night, Tim," said Straddle, closing the door after him; "and if I have not got your head into a noose, I'm very much mistaken."

"So," said Blowhard, "this is 'Tim, my Fidelio,' is it? Why I never met with such an imposing old rascal in my life."

"Then," said Straddle, "you've been lucky, for the character is by no means an uncommon one. I knew one fellow who realized 400*l.* per annum, by shamming preacher, and collecting for the distressed brethren of his church; but Mr. Tim's days are nearly over, depend upon it."

On the following morning, Timothy Thornback rose very shaky and very thirsty, but soon braced his nerves, and quenched his thirst with one quart of Mr. Rakestraw's strongest beer, which, with two mutton chops and an onion, constituted his usual morning meal. Tim was fond of his beer even as a boy, and old Jilks, when he first took him into his service, was surprised to find that he was forced to brew a great deal more frequently than he had used to do, especially best beer. How it went he could not conceive, as he always kept the key of the tap in his own waistcoat pocket, and never intrusted it to any one but his old housekeeper, who never indulged in any thing stronger than tea but gin. He hid himself in the cellar one day behind some large casks, and presently Tim came down to draw the small beer for luncheon. He set the large jug down on the floor under the small beer tap, and turned it on, leaving it to be filled at its leisure. He then clambered up to a high shelf, and took down a bean-stalk about eighteen inches long, and having extracted the bung of the strong beer barrel, inserted the hollow bean-reed, and sucked away until he had had enough. He then carefully bunged down the cask again, and restored his simple hydraulic instrument to its place.

Old Jilks got from the apothecary's a few grains of tartarized antimony, and strewed them on the inside of the bean-talk. When Tim went down to draw the beer for dinner, he had, as usual, his pint from the strong barrel in the usual way. While he was waiting at dinner, he felt very queer, and could not account for it; his eyes felt dim, and his head giddy; his knees seemed to fail him, and a violent perspiration broke out all over him.

"Violetta, my dear," said Jilks to his daughter, "*the rats drink our ale.*"



"Impossible, papa," said the young lady.

"It's a fact, I assure you ; but I've settled them—I've poisoned the cask—stirred in a pound of arsenic this morning—one half pint of that strong beer would poison half the town. If any body were to taste it even, they would feel first of all dim about the eyes, then giddy, weak about the knees, perspire violently, and then feel very sick."

Tim, who knew he had swallowed enough to poison the whole town, and felt the symptoms exactly as his master described them, fell on the floor with a deep groan, exclaiming, "Then I'm a murdered arrand-boy."

All was confusion, a doctor was sent for, and from a hint given him by the old banker, he found it necessary to bleed poor Tim, shave his head, clap a blister on his peritoneum, and administer a severe series of emetics and cathartics, before he could extract the virus of the arsenic from his veins.

Tim never practised hydraulics again, but contented himself with extracting a few coppers from the till now and then, and getting his beer at a neighbouring public.

After Tim had had his breakfast at the Shirt and Shoebag, he rubbed down his horses and his young master, and went to wait upon Miss Vi at breakfast.

"Tim, my Fidelio," said Miss Vi, after she had moistened the staple commodity of the celestial empire, "have you any meritorious miseries, claimants on the superfluous talents committed to my trust, this morning?"

"Yes, mum," said Tim, "fifteen or sixteen shillings worth of charitable obijcs in my list, and all on 'em miserable in the 'xtreme."

"I'm glad to hear it," said Miss Jilks. "Let me see your list."

Tim searched his pocket-book in every creek and crevice, but the list was not to be found.

"Why, wa'at can I ha' done wi it?" said Tim, looking to his mistress for information, which it was quite out of her power to give him.

"When did you see it last, Tim?"

"Last night as ever was, mum, when I was reading my blessed bible, 'cording to your 'xpress commands," said Tim, looking conventionally, "I was at it all the evenyn."

"Then you probably used the paper to mark the passage where you left off," said Miss Jilks. "Did you confine your search after grace to the gospel, or did you refresh your inward man with a mixture of Mosaic and Christian comforts?"

"Mixture? comforts?" said Tim, soliloquizingly, "that's it—I have it;" and added, aloud, "I'members me now, mum, and I'll go and fetch un."

Tim hurried down to college, and went to Mr. Straddle's rooms, He knocked three different times with a modest single rap, to which a dead silence was the only response. He knocked again, and looked through the keyhole, but could see nothing. On his substituting his ear for his eye, he could hear Mr. Straddle very plainly humming.

' Could a man be secure.'

" Why don't he answer?" said Tim to himself. " Oh ! I knows. Mr. Straddle, it's only me, Timothy Thornback."

These words, which were spoken in a very loud key, did as keys ought to do—opened the door.

" Well, Tim," said Straddle, " how's your mistress? When you want to get into my rooms another time give two loud double raps, and one heavy kick, and I shall know it is not a dun."

" I 'ool," said Tim. " Missus is pretty well, thank'e, but that a'nt it. You prigg'd my list of charitable objics last night, and missus wants it, as she's a goin for to 'pense her 'nevolence as usual."

" I mean to keep that list, Tim," said Straddle.

" What ! prig my property? Why, it's petty larceny. And what's the use on un to you?" inquired Tim.

" You and I, Tim, had better understand one another at once," continued Straddle, " I mean to marry your mistress, Tim, and if—"

" The devil ye do?" said Tim, " why she's old enow to be the mother on ye."

"—And if you attempt to betray me, or interfere with my plans, I produce that list, and the little confessions you made last night before two competent witnesses, which will open Miss Jilks's eyes to your rascality, and deprive you of a very lucrative place. Now, if you aid me, instead of thwarting me, I will, after the knot is safely tied, set you up in a flourishing public, and put all your little boys and girls out to school. You fully understand, Tim?"

" Yees," said Tim, " I think I do—but only just let I have un for a minnit, just to copy un—do now?"

" No, Tim, with your fertile imagination, you can easily invent a few ailments and misfortunes that will impose upon your mistress quite as well as this list of charitable objects, which does not go out of my possession, except to be handed up to my lord at the assizes, some day when you are being tried for robbing your employer," said Straddle, looking stern.

" Then you won't tell o' I, if I don't tell o' you?" asked Tim.

" Certainly not. You may go, Tim. Shut the door after you, and remember, I don't owe a farthing in the world, and never smoke."

"Oh! I see now," said Tim, "you never was 'xtravagant, and wants nothin of missus but her lovely person. That's the gammon, eh?"

"Exactly," said Straddle, "I see we understand one another."

Tim returned to his mistress with a newly-invented list of miseries, and Straddle went to call on Byron Scott Montgomery, whom he found very ill in bed from the effects of the last night's rash indulgence in a cigar and brandy and water.

"Well, Jilks, old fellow, not up yet?" said Straddle.

"Oh! Mr. Straddle, I've been so ill, and that bad man, Timothy, has been threatening to tell my aunt. I was obliged to give him a whole week's pocket-money to get him not to inform against me," said Jilks.

"An old rogue! But is your aunt, Miss Violetta, so violent against smoking, eh?" inquired Straddle.

"I can assure you," said Jilks, "she has threatened me over and over again, very solemnly, that if ever I smoked a cigar, or tasted spirits, she'd leave every farthing of her fortune to the Foundling Hospital and the Female Penitentiary. I'm at the mercy of that villain, Timothy Thornback, for ever!"

"You have placed yourself in a very unpleasant position, young man," said Straddle, menacingly, "but, when I'm your uncle, I may induce your aunt to be less strict in her injunctions."

"You my uncle," cried Jilks, sitting bolt upright in bed, and shoving his nightcap off his eyes to see more clearly.

"Yes, Mr. Byron ancettero, I mean to marry your aunt—the aunt that has cherished in her heart so ungrateful and disobedient a viper from his earliest childhood," said Straddle. "You will not endeavour to prevent the happy union, I am sure, for fear *I* should let her into your real character. Take things easy, and you may yet enjoy yourself as you please, without fear of Timothy, who is in my power. Thwart me, and you are ruined for life. I leave you to meditate upon this. I shall behave handsomely, depend upon it. Goodbye, till dinner-time."

## CHAPTER XXI.

MR. STRADDLE having ensured the secrecy and assistance of Timothy Thornback and Byron Scott Montgomery Jilks, made further arrangements for uninterruptedly laying siege to the purse and person of Miss Violetta Jilks. He left his oak open for two or three mornings in succession, and convinced all his tradesmen who kindly called upon him, that it would be in his power to pay them *their* "little accounts" by the end of term. Under this conviction *they* ceased to annoy him, except to request further orders.

Miss Violetta rode out every day. She was really fond of horse exercise, and rode well : her figure too looked remarkably juvenile on horseback, and, as she wore a green veil and a very jaunty black beaver, she appeared much younger than she was, and might have passed for a good-looking, elegant middle-aged lady. Though she varied her rides, and one day visited Woodstock, and cantered about the park ; another day sauntered amidst the chaste glades of Bagley Wood, then roamed about the grounds of Nuneham, or galloped over the heights of Shotover, and honoured with her presence the village of Wheatley—that most bull-baitingest and cock-fightingest of villages, as its inhabitants describe it—or wandered amidst the wilds of Whichwood Forest—by a very strange chance Mr. Straddle always happened to be riding out the same road. He joined her as a matter of course, and made himself very agreeable, by pointing out to her all the finest prospects, and paying her those little attentions which are particularly agreeable to ladies of a certain age. He was rewarded for his politeness by an invitation to tea, and music in the evening, with his friend Mr. Blowhard, and it is needless to say he always accepted the invitation.

Jilks, who hated riding out with his aunt, got off under a plea that his lectures required all his time; and, as his aunt insisted upon two hours a day being devoted to poetry and light literature under her own immediate tutorship, she considerably excused her nephew's attendance during her rides.

Jilks was delighted, and felt very much obliged to Straddle for offering to take his aunt off his hands. As to her 3,000*l.* per annum, it was a bore to lose that, but then his father was very rich, and would keep him in flourishing circumstances until his aunt died—which he fancied would not be long first—and then all her money would come to him, unless she had a family, which he considered an impossibility. He twanged his guitar, and strummed at his piano, all the morning, and idled away the rest of the day in a most satisfactory manner. After ten o'clock at night, when, with Straddle and Blowhard, he bade farewell to his aunt, he indulged in gradually increasing potations of brandy and water, and acquired a proficiency in smoking, unawed by the threats of Timothy Thornback, who, seeing that his influence over "the young un" was gone, wisely participated in the creature-comforts provided for and by his master. He procured himself a stock of pipes and returns, and, whilst his master indulged in cigars in his own room, he quietly lighted up his clay in the scout's closet.

Jilks who did not quite like the society of Straddle and Blowhard, whom he looked upon as old stagers compared with himself, formed an intimacy with one Mr. Rookington, a commoner of his own college. This gentleman was the son of a clergyman, who kept an endowed grammar-school in the country. He was the eldest of

eleven little pædagoguities, and consequently straitened in his means. At school he displayed a great deal of ingenuity in procuring a greater supply of pocket-money than his father could afford to allow him, by taking bribes from the other boys not to disclose certain little plots and plans which were laid for robbing orchards and hen-roosts, and introducing exciseable articles into the school. He would do anything for money, and was ready at all times to take all the pills and black doses supplied to the sick-room at sixpence a-head, and drink the water-gruel afterwards for threepence extra.

When he came up to Oxford with a small exhibition, and an additional 60*l.* per annum, which his father endeavoured to allow him by pinching himself and his children at home, he looked about him for a victim, upon whom he might sponge for those little luxuries in which his own limited income would not allow him to indulge. He toadied half a dozen men successfully for a short time, but, after he had fed upon them for two or three terms, without hinting at giving a return party, they gradually dropped his acquaintance. He was thrown upon his own resources, and fared anything but sumptuously every day, until Mr. Jilks came into residence. Rookington was a great physiognomist, and there were strong lines indicative of spoonery plainly engraved on the "mug" of Mr. Jilks; he, therefore, wisely resolved to victimize him to a great extent. He first of all scraped an acquaintance with Timothy Thornback at the stables of the Shirt and Shot-bag, and, by a judicious and generous bribe of sixpenn'orth of gin and water, obtained from him all the particulars of his master's habits, tastes, and peculiarities. Thus furnished with a *carte du pays*, he called upon and introduced himself to Mr. Jilks. By assisting him in his lectures, listening with profound attention to his musical performances, and paying him the most fulsome compliments upon his poetic effusions, he won Mr. Jilk's heart, and gradually withdrew him from the society of Straddle and Blowhard. He kindly breakfasted with him every morning, that he might read over his lecture to him; lunched with him, that he might listen to a portion of a new epic poem, which was to astonish the world; wined and spent the evening with him, after his return from his aunt's, that he might revel in the sweet sounds of the guitar and pianoforte, for which instruments he professed an excess of admiration when played upon by such very skilful hands as those of Mr. Jilks.

The following letter from Miss Jilks to her sister in India, after a three weeks' residence in Oxford, will give the reader an insight into that lady's opinions of things in general, and Mr. Straddle in particular :—

“ My dearest love, Euphrasia,

“ Separated as we are, I fear for ever, by the mountainous and furious billows of the great Pacific Ocean, which my ardent imagination depicts to me as far exceeding the highest waves in Chelsea Reach, in which my personal safety was once imperilled in a stormy voyage to Putney Bridge—I shudder now as I recal the remembrance of it to my heart of hearts—the only means of communicating to you the mutabilities of my earthly career is by sending you a line across the line by the packet-ship *Dontcareabit*, Captain Bungalow, teak-built and copper-fastened.

“ Your eldest son and heir, Byron Scott Montgomery, having completed his incipient educational exercises, under the care and tuition of several respectable reverend gentlemen in succession, (some of whom, my dearest love, I regret to say, wished to transfer their attentions from him to myself, in order, I suppose, that I might have benefit of clergy in the management of my property) I deemed it right that he should participate in those professional advantages which the Universities alone can confer. I have selected Oxford as the scene of his future honours and distinctions, in preference to Cambridge. Oxford is more classical, and at Cambridge so much time is taken up in drawing out all sorts of Chinese-puzzle-like figures, with all the letters of the alphabet at the corners of them, that I am convinced it must cramp a genius in which the poetic and imaginative hold despotic sway. Though Byron Scott Montgomery is musical, I do not see the necessity for his learning conic sections that he may be able to define the ‘music of the *spheres* ;’ and *triangles* are only required in a full orchestral band. He is, I am happy to say, unaddicted to sporting propensities, and therefore cares nothing for *triggernometry*. By the advice of the last of his seventeen reverend tutors I have entered him, (such, my dearest love, is the correct term, like ‘entering’ a horse for a plate) at St. Peter’s College, Oxford, as a gentleman-commoner, a rank that confers upon him many advantages ; among the rest that of paying double fees and double battels—that is, his tavern bills for eating and drinking—and wearing two silk gowns, one of which, the *dress* gown, is very like a parish clerk’s, in London, with a lot of little silk tassels about it, and a trencher cap, covered with pure black silk velvet.

“ I confess, my dearest love, that I found many things in Oxford diametrically opposed to my preconceived notions of college matters. On my arrival at St. Peter’s, I inquired for the lady of the establishment, and was told that the statutes forbade any such appointment. The principal being a *célibat*, modesty would not permit my calling upon him ; I therefore wrote him a note, and, after I had esta-

blished myself in convenient lodgings, which I did in a few hours, through the agency of my faithful and prudent servant, Timothy—my fidelio, as I call him—who got them for six guineas a week, and ten shillings the maid) I was called upon by the Bursar—a sort of house-steward and groom of the chambers—a very gentlemanly man, who says he's very fond of turtle and East India preserves and pickles (you had better send some over to him, as it may forward Byron Scott Montgomery's views in getting the Newdigate prize) and who kindly favoured me with an introduction to a bedmaker, and pointed out to me a set of vacant apartments.

"I went down to college with Byron Scott Montgomery, and inquired for the bedmaker, of No. 9 staircase, expecting to see a nice nurse-like, middle-aged, respectable woman; but even in this department females are prudentially forbidden by the statutes—and I was presented to a masculine bedmaker, six feet high, looking much better adapted for the laborious duties of a porter or chairman, than the gentler ones of shaking up feather-beds and emptying slops. He was very civil, however, and showed me up to the vacant rooms. Oh! my dearest Euphrasia! you have heard of 'ready-furnished apartments' being horrible places, but you cannot form the minutest conception of the horrors of a furnished apartment in a college. There was not a table, chair, sofa, or bedstead, that had not some of its members mutilated. The carpet was the holeiest of all the holey ones I ever saw. The hearth-rug perforated with red-hot pokers—the fender jammed flat in front, the looking-glass smashed and the crockery in a most dilapidated state. Timothy, I am happy to say, undertook to dispose of the old furniture to the greatest advantage; indeed he succeeded in getting 2*l.* 11*s.* for it, and has made the place habitable for 150*l.*, which, he tells me, is dirt cheap.

"Now as to the associates he has met with, poor dear unsophisticated Byron Scott Montgomery has been most providentially felicitous. I had formed an erroneous notion that all the students were like himself, "children of a larger growth," as the poet says; but, I assure you, many of them are men grown, and very fine young men too, as far as I am a judge. Mr. Straddle is a very good specimen of the class; but then, he has been in the army, and is a brave young man, who would have shed a deal of blood in his country's defence, only he has never had an opportunity of doing so since the peace was proclaimed—which is very unfortunate! He, however, has given up the army for the more peaceful pleasures of the church militant. He is reading for orders, and, I have no doubt, will be one of the firmest pillars of our ecclesiastical edifice. Byron Scott Montgomery is lucky in making his acquaintance. His attentions to me are very pleasing, and, were it not that *I have devoted myself and my little income to my dear nephew, I might be inclined to listen to the professions of profound esteem*

uttered by Mr. Straddle (who is really a good-looking manly man), and exchange a single life for the joys of wedlock; but as long as my nephew conducts himself in the correct way he is now doing—abstemiously avoiding all those little indulgences and excesses in which other young men revel—I shall willingly sacrifice myself upon the altar of lonely celibacy. Mr. Blowhard is also another of our intimates, and, though not so poetically grand, nor so personally interesting as Mr. Straddle, is by no means a despicable specimen of adolescence.

“ I ride out every day with Timothy and Mr. Straddle, who, by the merest chance, rides out at the same hour and along the same roads, and is kind enough to join me and point out the beauties of the ruralities through which we canter. Oh! Euphrasia! if you could but hear how energetic he is in his descriptions, and see how well he sits his horse—a goose-rumped dark bay, with a short dock—you would be delighted. Byron Scott Montgomery, I am sorry to say, is a vile rider—Oh! if he would but take a lesson from Mr. Straddle!

“ I have consented to join Mr. Straddle and his friend in a party to Nuneham—a delightfully-retired and unmolested spot, on the banks of Isis—the river which flows near Oxford, navigable for coal-barges and small craft—this very day, and must therefore close my epistolary correspondence. Tim is going with us to wait at table; and I think his presence must prevent all calumnious inuendoes; but, alas! ‘be thou as chaste as ice’—you know the rest; nobody knows me up here—and it’s of no consequence.—Adieu, my dearest Euphrasia! I hear the creaking of Straddle’s boots on the stairs, and can only find time to assure you of the everlasting affection of your sister,

“ VIOLETTA JILKS.

“ P. S. It is not Straddle after all—only Timothy, in a pair of his left-off boots—which accounts for the concordance of the creakings. Tim is come to say the gondola waits for me, and to ask if I can eat pigeon-pie and cold lamb and salad. Dear Straddle! how very kind and thoughtful he is. I doat on pigeon-pie, which he poetically terms ‘dove tart.’

“ V. J.”

Before he accompanies the party to Nuneham, I must beg the reader to peruse another letter, which Mr. Jilks is writing to the last of his seventeen tutors, at his particular request :—

“ My dear Sir,

“ I sit down and take up my pen, as you requested me, to tell you how I got over the examination, previous to my matriculation.



It was not near so severe as you led me to expect, for the moment I told the Dean I was to enter as a gentleman-commoner, he said he was sure I should do very well, shut the book, and never asked me a single question, except whether I thought of taking an honorary degree; which I think I shall, as it's very complimentary and convenient. I have got very comfortable rooms, now they are new furnished, but I don't like getting up to chapel in the morning; and if I go in the evening—and I must go to one or the other—I am apt to go to sleep, which is a scone. I have got introduced to two nice men enough, only they are as old as yourself—Mr. Straddle and Mr. Blowhard. The former, I think, is doing a bit of strong courtship to my aunt, who is old enough to be his mother; but I don't care about that, as it keeps her attention off me, and I'm not obliged to ride out with her every day, with Tim behind us; and can smoke my cigar, and drink my brandy and water in quiet with my friend Rookington, who, though I have not introduced him to my aunt, for he says he don't like old harri-dans, is worth two Straddles and half a dozen Blowhards. He's got more discrimination than any man I ever met with; he sees and appreciates my talents, and acknowledges my superiority in poetic and musical acquirements. He's so fond of hearing me play, that he smokes half a dozen cigars every night, while he listens to me; and has made Tim quite of his way of thinking, and has induced him to take a pipe in the scout's room, to listen to me also.

"I have got the greater part of my poem ready to send in for the Newdigate prize. Rookington, who reads it as it progresses, at luncheon every day, says it is beautiful and must be successful. I have no doubt of his judgment being correct; but, as two heads are always better than one, pray read it, and give me your opinion upon it. Don't correct or alter it, as every author must know his own meaning best. The passages which strike you as particularly good, you can score underneath with a pencil. I am just going on the water with Straddle, who has invited aunt Vi and myself to a party at cold meat at Nuneham; and I mean to take Rookington and my guitar to amuse them on the road—that is the river.

"Your's very truly,

"B. S. M. JILKS.

"P. S. Return the MS. of prize poem by return of post, and make the pencil-marks quite plain."

As Tim wrote home to his wife by the same post, it will be as well for the reader to see his opinions of "life in Oxford :"—

“ My Dear missus t,

“ i Havunt Rote To yu sunce i bin Here, fur Fere of not havin nuthin satisfacktery to Send inside of It. i rite now Becos i ave Skraped Up 20 pound, And got It in a single not, number 5,440 ; and If this letter never cums to and yu Send Up to london to the bank, and ave It stoped pamint. i maid a pritty good thing Of yung master’s ferniter : i got seven pund Ten For the old, And An ice dosure Of twenty five pursent out of The new, wich is very ansum; and i maks tu pund ten a wik Out of marm Viletty’s logins; and i wud ave sent you more munney, but things is so dere in Oxford, and i ave bin forced To by a pare of nu butes, with wite tops, As broun uns Is kwite Out Of fashin , and tu pare Of doskins, wich Is deer yu no ; and i shud a maid A deal of munney on the old sistum, only-i was kotched out at It by wun mister straddle, oose got My list of caritabul objics, and menes to marry My missus ; and if i Interfere, he sais he will impose all My expusishuns, and ave me kwarterses-shund for A brich of Trust, and if It wer only him, i shudnt kare ; but There wer wun mister bloard, a frend of hisun, as herd me kunfess all My Trix upon missus, and drink the brandy and warter ; and He swares If i split, as He’ll turn King’s Heavy dunce agin me, so i’m In a clef stik.

“ i like Oxford onkimmon, but aint maid So much munney by my nolige of hosflesh as i thort i shud ; fur bless you, missus t, they is jist as wide awak as yu can’t kunseave, and wen they bets, It aint munney hut drink ; and as i ave got kariblansh, as Marm Viletty calls as much beer as i like, In the buttry, I seldum bets. Master birun scot mungumry kums It very strong now With grog and segars, as mister straddle ave bin, and informed him all about the list of caritabul objics, and he never minds me now, as he noes I darnt split, and he’s got a yung man as egs him on, and drinks, eats, and smo akes at his xpense every day, And all day, and i helps him.

“ The college survints is very nice men, and onkummin fond of bere ! But it korsts um nothin, as they chork It up to there masters. i rides out every da with missus, and as a shillin for tellin mister straddle which way she mins to go ; and He jines her, and i rides behine, while He gammons hur.

“ ime just going to a plase kalld nuneum, to wate at tabul, or rather grassplat, as we’re to seed of the grown, and have wot Miss Viletty calls a *dijinnay ally foursheet all frisky*. If mister straddle marys missus, i’ve no doubt he’ll stan sumthin hansum, and then i sets up in the public line, As my privat spekillayshuns wont Be wurth nuthin. there’s lots of gals about, But upon my word an honor as a gentlimun, missers t, i never even lucks at um.

"giv My love to the littul ones, and rite to me At Mister rake-  
strors, shirt and sholbag, sun peter's strit, Oxford; And bliv Me,

Yur feekshunhate husban,

"TIM". THORNBAC.

"P. S. kip a sharp i upon old tunbelly, as kips the goles, and the momint he's ded, arx old worts, the gret brewr, for the rifusel of the hous, and ile lay in a stok of trickle and mulasses, redy to flsik his bere."

As soon as Timothy had finished his letter, and put it into the post-office with Miss Violetta's epistle to her sister, and Mr. Jilks's to his late tutor, it was quite time for him to be ready to convey the bampers which contained the materials for the feed *al fresco* to the house-boat. Mr. Straddle had at first intended to hire a four-oared cutter, with an awning to it, and pull Miss Violetta down to Nuneham; but, after a little consideration, he gave up the notion, recollecting his proneness to puffing and perspiring when subjected to any violent exercise. He thought, too, that during the pull he should have no opportunity of saying sweet things to his fair friend, even if he had breath enough to spare, without being overheard by the rest of the party. He therefore hired what is called a house-boat, which Miss Vi chose to call a gondola, and by putting Tim to con, and Blowhard to steer her, and persuading Jilks to "strike the light guitar" in the stern, and Rookington to "light the light cigar," and listen to him, he contrived to get a quiet *tête-à-tête* inside with Miss Jilks all the way down. Their conversation, which it would be a gross breach of confidence to repeat, was only interrupted by a little interesting timidity on the part of the lady, when passing through the perils of Ilfley and Sandford pound-locks. The motion of the water caused the boat to roll a little, and Miss Jilks, purely from fear of being drowned, clung to Mr. Straddle for support, who bravely held her in his arms until the danger was over. Of course he was rewarded for the immense risk he ran, by the warm thanks and still warmer looks of the lady, who permitted him to keep his arm round her waist, in case of the boat's being capsized.

They arrived safely at the cottages at Nuneham, and were welcomed by old Franklin, the retired gamekeeper, in his deer-skin cap, and ushered into the round-house, which a cad, who had been sent down early in the morning for the express purpose, had secured for them.

There were not many people at Nuneham, as Straddle had purposely selected the day of a fight between Jack Perkins and the Sailor Boy, which he knew would attract the undergraduates. The

townspeople of Oxford and Abingdon, he was aware, seldom ventured to visit the place, until all the men were gone down. Champagne, after a long and strong pull, is apt to be too exciting; and there have been instances of its stimulating its consumers to commit little irregular rudenesses among the fair *bourgeoises* and their mercantile escorts.

While Timothy was preparing the collation, Blowhard whipping for chubs under the island, and Jilks twanging his everlasting guitar, to the mingled annoyance and amusement of the few visitors assembled on the rustic bridge, and his crony pretending to be absorbed in delight, but really admiring the flavour of his Havannah, Straddle took a delightful stroll—leisurely though, for it winded him—up Carfax Hill. There he halted to recover his breath, and permit Miss Jilks to do the same, and admire the fine view of Oxford. A tip to the gardener procured them a sight of the private gardens, and a delicate bouquet of the choicest flowers, which Violetta permitted Mr. Straddle to fix in the band which clasped her delicate waist. Another tip gained for them access to the house and pictures; and there Mr. Straddle, who had been getting up “the dictionary of painters” all the morning, displayed such a wonderful knowledge of the style and names of the great masters, as filled Miss Jilks with admiration, and perfectly annihilated the housekeeper, who had got up all the subjects and their illustrators so completely by rote, that, if she missed one picture, she was thrown out, until she went back to the one nearest the door, and recovered the thread of her descriptive powers.

“Oh! Mr. Straddle,” cried Miss Jilks, looking extatic, “do look at that splendid marine landscape.”

“That, mum,” said the housekeeper, “is a shipwreck by—”

“Falconer, of course,” said Straddle; “he is certainly inimitable in shipwrecks.”

“And there again!” said Miss Jilks, “do look at those lovely young ladies, who must feel very chilly from being so lightly clad.”

“Those, mum, is the four seasons, by—”

“Thomson,” said Jilks. “Thomson’s Seasons are too notorious to need description.”

“That ere, mum,” continued the housekeeper, in a hurry to get through her work, and *draw* the next party, “is meant to ripresent one of the heathen fables, it’s by—”

“Gay undoubtedly. Gay’s fables, my dear Miss Jilks, *you* know to be worth looking at. The Chiaroscuro is brilliant in the extreme,” said Straddle, counterfeiting a telescope with his two fists, and pretending to examine the Reubens critically.

“This ere to the right, mum, is a picter of still life—the mouse.

a nibbling of the cheese, looks as natural as natural can be ; and the cheese itself is much admired—it's by Parme"—

"—Parmesan," said Straddle, "his cheeses are universally admired."

"Parmegiano, we calls him," said the housekeeper.

"It's all the same," said Straddle, "that's his name in Germany—his native country—here we call him Parmesan, for brevity's sake."

"I knows nothin of that ere, sir," said the housekeeper. "It mought be true, and it moughtn't. That *re*-markible tall gentleman in black, with a death's head 'tween his fistesses, is Amblet the Prince of Dunkirk, by—"

"The immortal Charles Young," said Straddle.

"Young?" said Miss Vi. "I thought Young was celebrated for acting the part, not for painting it."

"Why, my dear Miss Violetta," said Straddle, after coughing six times, and blowing his nose thrice, "Young was an actor, certainly—a regular tip-top-sawyer in his—his—dear me! histrionics; but then what actor can excel, unless he can *paint* characters to the life? eh! my dear Miss Violetta?—this fully accounts for the—the—little—"

The housekeeper fortunately relieved Mr. Straddle's confusion, by informing the party that "her compartment terminated there;" and showing them out with a profound curtesy, hurried off to repeat her catalogue to a fresh company.

During their walk back to the round-house, which Miss Jilks christened "The Rotunda," Straddle said but little, though he sighed loudly and frequently, and pressed the arm which hung on his rather amorously and vigorously. He wisely reserved his extatics until the champagne should have furnished him with a more copious flow of words, and removed any little remnants of reserve from the fair one's bosom.

"Glad you be come, mum," said Tim who was standing on the grassplat, wiping a bottle of champagne with a napkin, and *hissing* to the motion, as if he was rubbing down a horse, "for Master Byron's so precious hungry, and says if you don't move your old stumps a little livelier, he's blowed if he don't pitch into the pies by himself."

"Timothy! my Fidelio!" exclaimed the horror-struck Miss Jilks. "Mr. Byron Scott Montgomery never sent *me* such a message as that?"

"Why, it worn't disactly a message," replied Tim, "it wor more of the nater of a observatin."

"Which you ought not to have repeated, sirrah! you are *impertinent*, and shock the delicate auricles of your mistress by your

vulgarity; begone, sirrah, and get dinner ready," said Straddle, looking kickingly at Tim.

Tim looked sulky, and muttered something about "not having a master yet," and went on very leisurely rubbing down the bottle.

Straddle turned quietly round to Miss Jilks, and said, loudly enough for Tim to hear him, "By the bye, my dear Miss Violetta, I have a little list of charitable objects—"

Tim turned round, and winking deprecatingly at him, assured him the *dejnnay ally foursheet* was quite ready and waiting; he then seized his mistress by the arm, almost pushed her into the cottage, and commenced clattering the plates, and knives and forks, and nudging Mr. Straddle every time he passed him, as a hint not to expose him to his mistress.

Though the dinner was not such a spread as Mr. Straddle would have felt bound to set before his beloved, had he entertained her in his own rooms, or at a hotel, yet the college cook had done his duty by the cold lamb and pigeon-pie; and the appetite, which invariably attends upon pic-nic-ery, made every viand appear doubly delicious. Though the conversation did not flow very rapidly—for the males were too hungry, and the female too happy to talk—yet the champagne did. Tim, by Mr. Straddle's instructions, kept perpetually popping cork after cork, and filling the glasses as speedily as they were emptied.

Every body, of course, challenged the lady; and Straddle, as a *ci-devant militaire*, convinced her of the impropriety of ever refusing a challenge; and expatiated as lengthily on the superiority of the wine "of his own importing," as his inordinate appetite would allow him to do. Thus urged, Miss Jilks, as she expressed it, "quaffed the bubbling ambrosial nectar," which had been reluctantly sent from Scott's cellars "on tick" that very morning, wrapped up in whitey-brown paper. Blowhard backed his friend in all his assertions as to the genuineness and authenticity of the importation, and drank largely himself, to prove the truth of the assertions. Rookington never "threw away a chance" himself; and, under the pretence of making Timothy attentive to Mr. Byron Scott Montgomery's glass, got his own filled twice to every body else's once.

When the dinner was over, and Miss Jilks had taken two or three more glasses of champagne (for Mr. Straddle would not allow her to profane her lips with port, insinuating that champagne alone was suited to ladies and angels, cherubs and seraphs), she proposed a gentle stroll by herself, whilst the gentlemen took their wine. To this Mr. Straddle could not listen, but insisted on joining her, looking exceedingly reproachful at her for imagining that he could prefer wine to "woman, lovely woman," and winking at Blowhard, as much as to say, "all right."

*After wandering about the woods for some time, during which*

Straddle talked an immensity of twaddle about poetry, painting, and music, but with such volubility and obscurity of utterance that Miss Jilks could not by any possibility detect his ignorance or deny any of the opinions he advanced, he led her into a neat arbour which overlooks the fair city of Oxford, the winding Isis, and its banks for many miles. The arbour, like a pistol-case, was only made to hold "a pair;" and, either from the power of the sun's rays or the champagne, Miss Jilks complained of the heat, and gracefully threw back her green veil, and looked warm and languishing at Mr. Straddle, exclaiming, "heigho! I feel—I feel—very—very—faint."

"My dearest Violetta," cried Straddle, clasping her in his arms, "recline on me."

Miss Vi obediently did as she was bidden, and, as her hand fell upon his shoulder, he applied his lips to one of their legitimate uses, and imprinted a series of kisses upon the lady's, which lasted until the faintness left her, which it did at last—going off like a lucifer match, with a loud "smack."

"You feel better, I trust, my dear Violetta," said Straddle, still keeping her "tight in hand."

"Oh! much better—but faint—very faint still," replied Miss Vi.

Mr. Straddle finding the previous dose had bettered the condition of his patient, and taking her reply to mean "*repetatur haustus*," administered a second edition a little more powerful than the first, which proved so reviving that Miss Vi sprung from the physician's arms, dropped her green veil, and cried—"Oh! Mr. Straddle! don't!"

Mr. Straddle knew enough of medicine to know that it ought to be "well shaken when taken," and struggled to keep possession of his fair patient, in which, after several little "don'ts—pray don'ts—how can yous," and other usuals on such occasions, he perfectly succeeded. Miss Vi allowed him to support her in his arms, but kept the green veil down as closely as the green curtain is kept between a comedy and the farce.

Straddle, after keeping the lady and his tongue quiet for some minutes, thought it a seasonable moment to burst out in a fit of extatics.

"My dearest Violetta! *this* is what I call happiness—felicity! here is every thing to delight the eye and the heart! the loveliest of her lovely sex in my arms, and the prettiest view possible in my eye! only observe—to the right, a view of Oxford, that classical abode of dons and duns—to the left, Abingdon, famed for sacking and smockfrocks—directly opposite us, the park of Radley and its neat farmhouse—the very picture of rural felicity—with a valuable heap of manure within a few yards of its door! Oh, Miss Violetta! as Cicero says in his 'Art of Love'—

“How happy could I be with either!”

I forget the *Latin* words—but that’s the sentiment—and a very happy remark it is.”

“Very! singularly happy!” said the fair Jilks, sighing profoundly.

“Oh!” continued Straddle, bending his arm and nearly squeezing the breath out of Miss Vi’s taper waist, “With such a home as that, and married to the woman of my heart, how happily could I live!”

“Congeniality of souls!” said Miss Vi.

“Make our own butler and cheese,” said Straddle.

“Moonlight walks!” said the lady.

“Kill our own mutton,” said the gentleman.

“Delightful wanderings by the river’s brink, every evening!” cried Miss Jilks.

“Fresh eggs and butter, every morning!” cried Straddle.

“Be all in all to each other,” said Miss Vi—

“‘The world forgetting—by the world forgot.’”

“Yes,” said Straddle, “and brew our own beer! What a perfect picture of happiness!—Oh! my dear Violetta! you must have observed the inward flame which is consuming my vitalities! it cannot have burnt unseen by you—take pity on me, and kindly clap an extinguisher on the combustibles, by confessing that the fire has communicated with the premises of your heart, and that you’re not insured against its effects in any office.”

“I own I am not insured, Mr. Straddle,” sighed Miss Vi, “but show me the policy—the policy of—”

“D—n the policy, marm!” said Straddle, energetically; “let me seize the premium. Be mine, Violetta! let us join our little all together, and live but for each other, on a plain joint and a pudding every day.”

“Tempting offer!” cried Miss Jilks, wiping away a tear with a handsomely-bordered white cambric; “but I must not—dare not consent. I have, from the purest motives of sisterly affection, devoted myself and my little property to the welfare of my musical, philosophical, and poetical nephew, Byron Scott Montgomery Jilks. For his sake I have refused the plighted vows of the Rev. Messrs. Fribble, Frobble, Frumps, and Dumps, with many other reverends too numerous to mention! and for him I must sacrifice you—even you my only, military, academic passion—oh! oh! oh!”

Miss Vi became hysterical and kissed Straddle twice during the fit; a compliment he returned with interest, and renewed the attack thus:—

“But if your nephew should prove unworthy of so noble a sacri-



fice! if he should be secretly indulging in those little excesses, so degrading to himself and disgusting to you? if he should drink, smoke, sing improper songs? would you, in that case, consent to live a life of single misery, and give your money to one who would waste it on spirituous liquors and tobacco?"

"Never!" exclaimed Miss Jilks, "never! but there are no hopes of that! he's all perfection."

"Is he?" said Straddle, rising rather suddenly, and adjusting Violetta's dress—"Come and see."

He relied confidently upon the exertions of his friend, Blowhard, which were to be used during his absence, and he found that his confidence had not been misplaced. Just as he descended the gravel walk which leads round the back of the round-house, with Miss Jilks leaning on his arm, he heard Byron Scott Montgomery, the nephew for whom she had refused the Reverends Fribble, Frobble, Frumps, and Dumps, *cum cæteris paribus*, and who was "all perfection," singing, in a loud drunken voice, a very improper song.

"Oh! Mr. Straddle—'tis—'tis *his* voice," screamed Violetta.

"Come along, madam," said Straddle; and, jerking her round the corner of the cottage, presented to her astonished eyes Mr. Byron Scott Montgomery, with a cigar in his mouth, and a very large tumbler of brandy and water in his hand; his upper lip was covered with moustaches of burnt cork, and his head with his hat, set on crosswise, the crown being crushed down nearly as flat as a pancake. His friend, Mr. Rookington, was placed with his back in a corner, and propped up with two chairs, incapable of doing any thing but retaining his cigar between his teeth. Tim was sitting on the ground, with the brandy bottle between his legs, and a pipe between his lips, very nearly as tipsy as his master.

"That strain again," said Blowhard, when he saw Straddle and Miss Jilks were near enough to hear the melody.

"No," said Jilks, hiccupping, "no, it's your turn next—I—I—feel rather queer: Tim, some brandy—besides, that old cat of an aunt of mine will be toddling back soon; she's fool enough to think I never smoke—never have my grog or my—eh?—she's a fool—an old fool, ain't she? she's lots of tin, though, and, I'm to have it all. Tim, some more brandy!—I'm to have every infernal coin she's worth in the world—hurraah!"

"Not one farthing!" screamed Miss Jilks; "Byron Scott Montgomery Jilks, you've alienated my affections for ever. Mr. Straddle, lead me away!"

"You be bothered, you old cat!" cried Jilks, as Straddle carried *his aunt* away, half fainting, into the house-boat. "Come, Blowhard; Rookington, my boy, let's have a bumper to drink perdition

to all old harridans!—three glasses of grog, Tim, and make them strong. And as for Straddle—”

“What of him, sir?” inquired Blowhard, seeing that individual had returned for Miss Jilks’s reticule, in which were her salts; “what of him, sir?”

“He’s a poverty-struck, meddling, money-seeking, circumventing hypocrite, and I’ll expose him,” said Jilks, intending to thump the table, but missing it, and hitting Tim on the head.

“You will recollect this insult, Mr. Blowhard,” said Straddle, coming forward.

“Certainly,” said Blowhard.

“And you, Mr. Rookington.” Rooky hiccupped, assentingly, which was all he could do. “Mr. Jilks,” continued Straddle, “you shall hear from me to-morrow morning.”

“You be bothered,” said Jilks, courageously, “and that ugly old methodistical cat of an aunt of mine too.”

“Blowhard,” said Straddle, “put those two beasts into the bows of the boat, and let Tim keep guard over them while you steer us up.”

After some strong struggles and positive refusals to move, on the part of Mr. Jilks, in which he was backed by Rookington, who declared he had not “had his whack out,” Tim, who had deposited the hampers on board, and signalled the horse-driver, returned to the round-house, and caught his young master round the waist. He then tucked him, gizzard-fashion, under his arm, and carried him off to the boat. In spite of several spiteful kicks on the shins, he got him to the side of the river, where he deposited him on the grass. He then spat on his hands, as all operatives do when about to undertake any unwonted exertion, and, catching him by his coat-collar with one hand, and his sit-down-upons with the other, hoisted him into the bows. Unluckily for the instrument, but luckily for himself, Mr. Jilks fell upon his guitar, which was crushed as flat as a crumpet, and gave out a last sad sound, which harmonized remarkably with its master’s feelings, and the grunt by which he expressed them. Rookington was deposited by the side of his friend, by Blowhard, who then took his station at the helm.

Straddle, who was inside with Miss Violetta, had not so pleasant a voyage up stream as he had anticipated. Miss Jilks, although she allowed him to clasp her waist for fear of accidents, was too much hurt by her nephew’s conduct to do any thing else but complain of it in the bitterest terms, or to listen to any thing but indignant observations upon his unworthiness.

Straddle made violent love once or twice between the heats, but it availed him not. Woman-like, Miss Jilks was searching the recesses of her kind heart to find some excuse for Byron Scott Montgomery’s conduct—some reason for extending to him her gracious

pardon, and reinstating him in her good graces. To Mr. Straddle's warm solicitations, that she would "say she was his," she replied, "that she could not, would not consent to defeat the plans of her whole life without giving her dear sister's child an opportunity of explaining his extraordinary conduct. She was sure he was not in the habit of indulging in vulgar excesses; the heat of the day, the excitement of the scene, the motion of the boat, must have operated detrimentally to his sobriety."

"But why, my dear Miss Violetta, should he abuse you, his best, his kindest friend?" said Straddle.

"Alas! he knew not what he said!" sighed Miss Vi.

"*In vino veritas*," as Longinus and Mr. Hennekey's wine-vaults say," observed Straddle; "that is, when a man's drunk he don't disguise his real sentiments; and, I'm sorry to say, in his sober moments, my dear Miss Jilks, your nephew is in the habit of speaking of you in terms any thing but complimentary."

"Impossible, Mr. Straddle!" cried Miss Vi.

"He calls you, on my honour," replied Straddle, "an old cat, an old feminine dog, old harridan, and several other disgusting names, for which, if you will but confer upon me a marital right to do so, I will call him to a severe account."

"I never *can* believe it," said Miss Jilks. "The ungrateful wretch, to whom I have sacrificed all my best years—"

"Not *all*!" insinuated Straddle.

"Well, a *few* of them; and if I knew it for a fact, I do not think it would cost me much to tear him from my heart for ever, and fill up the vacancy with a more worthy object."

"You shall have the most satisfactory proof," said Straddle, just as the barge grated on the gravel of Christ Church Meadow, and Tim cried out, "Now, mum, here we is!"

Blowhard and Tim were left to see Mr. Jilks and his friend Rookington home to college, which they effected by getting Jack Hutton's luggage-barrow from the Angel, whilst Miss Jilks was "seen home" by Straddle, who promised to go back after her nephew.

What with the excitement of the day and her nephew's naughtiness, Miss Jilks passed a dreamy, uncomfortable night.

As soon as Mr. Straddle had left Miss Jilks, he returned towards the meadow, but not by the principal streets. He was aware that Jack Hutton and Blowhard would cut across the bye-lanes to avoid the proctors. He was quite right in his calculations of their prudence, and met the barrow and its contents carefully covered with a tarpaulin, in a little dirty place called Pembroke Lane, just opposite Tom Gate. As soon as the bodies were safely deposited in Jilks's rooms, and Jack Hutton had been dismissed with an order on the buttery, and a further order to call next morning on Jilks, to be

paid for portorage, Mr. Straddle explained to Blowhard his plans for the morrow, and prepared to put them into preliminary execution. Tim was sent to a chemist's, with an order for two papers, each containing five grains of sulphate of zinc. These were carefully dissolved in two large tumblers of hot water, and with difficulty administered to the two invalids. The effect of the doses was speedy and satisfactory; and an application of cold water to their heads soon made the intoxicated men perfectly sober. A cup of very strong coffee in about half an hour afterwards restored them to the little senses they were naturally possessed of.

As soon as Tim had reported the success of his prescriptions to Mr. Straddle, who was making up for the self-denial he had practised during the day, by diligent applications to the cigar-box and liqueur-case, Blowhard went up to Mr. Jilks's rooms, and found that gentleman and his friend sipping their mocha, or its Oxford substitute, burnt beans.

"You must be fully aware, Mr. Jilks," said Blowhard, after he had been ordered to come in, "that your language to Mr. Straddle this day was such as no gentleman can put up with. With your abuse of your aunt, disgusting as it was, I have nothing to do; but your insults to my friend can only be atoned for by blood."

"Gammon," cried Jilks, looking as if he had murdered a turnip and washed his face in the blood of it.

"We were all drunk together," said Rookington.

"That I deny, sir," said Blowhard. "You and Mr. Jilks may make brutes of yourselves if you please, but you shall not insult a gentleman with impunity. Mr. Jilks, Mr. Straddle expects you to meet him with pistols in Port Meadow, near the bridge at Woolvercot, after chapel to-morrow morning. Allow me to recommend your disposing of your personalities this night."

"Personalities!" said Jilks, as soon as Blowhard had banged the door after him, "what does he mean?"

"Mean," said Rookington, upon whom a hope of getting something operated like a charm, "why—your property—your personal property—those nicely bound books—that piano—the German flute with light silver keys—the guitar—only it's smashed—your furniture, plate, glasses, and pictures—you *may* be killed, you know, if you go out."

"Go out! what to fight?" screamed Jilks. "Why, I never let a pistol off in my life! My aunt, confound her, would never even let me play with gunpowder—I *wont* 'go out,' as you call it."

"But you *must*, my dear friend," said Rooky, "or you'll be cut for ever."

"But I'm sure to be shot—Straddle's military," said Jilks, "and I can't see the difference between cutting and maiming."

*After a very long argument, Rooky succeeded in convincing*

Jilks that he must not be branded as a coward, and that most probably the pistols would not be loaded with ball. He then put a sheet of paper, and a pen and ink, before him, and begged him to dispose of his property as his heart and good feelings dictated to him.

"But who am I to leave them to?" inquired Jilks—"Tim is—"

"D—n Tim!" said Rooky. "Who is to be your second?"

"*You*, of course," said Jilks.

"Then, I think, my dear friend, that the man who risks rustication, expulsion, and being tried for murder, ought to have some little recompence for the dangers he runs," said Rooky, wiping his eyes and looking romantic.

Jilks took the hint and his pen, and in very shakey, half-legible handwriting, made over all he possessed to his delighted dear friend, who, if he had not had the furniture and other effects in prospectu, would not only have dissuaded Jilks from fighting, but have gone to the dean, or some other authority, and exposed the whole affair.

Jilks next wrote a very penitent letter to his aunt, in which he confessed that ever since he had been up in Oxford, he had gradually acquired a taste for excesses of all sorts, and had ungratefully abused her, his kindest friend, on all occasions. He even told her that his full belief was, that Straddle would never have called him him out, but to show his pretended love to a woman *old enough to be his mother*, and whom he wanted to marry merely to be able to pay off his ticks.

This letter was given to Tim, with strict orders to deliver it to Miss Violetta in the morning, if he was not home to breakfast.

Rookington, while his dear friend was writing his farewell to his aunt, put his last will and testament into his pocket, and hurried off to Sykes's, and ordered that efficient gunmaker to send half a dozen cases of pistols down to St. Peter's for Mr. Jilks's inspection, who would return those he did not require in the morning.

When the weapons arrived, Rooky selected a pair, and taught his friend how to pull the triggers. He then suggested going to bed. Jilks, however, could not go to bed—he was afraid of dreaming. Rooky suggested brandy and water, to which Jilks agreed; and, after taking a tumbler or two, which tasted strongly of brimstone, he fell into a troubled sleep in his chair, where Rooky left him.

In the morning Jilks awoke—stiff, cold, and uncomfortable—he could not tell why—until the proceedings of the previous day and night recurred to him. He made up his mind not to fight, but to use the knowledge his friend had instilled into him the night before, by pulling a trigger at himself. He looked at himself in a glass, and was shocked at the pallor—the pipe-clay pallor of his face, and

resolved to bring the blood into his cheeks by sending a bullet through his head; but the pistols were not loaded, and he did not know how to load them.

Just as he was trying to perform that necessary preliminary, Rookington came in, and pouring out two glasses of brandy, took one himself, and bade his friend swallow the other and follow him immediately. Jilks gulped the liquid, but moved not. Rooky slipped the pistol-case into a carpet-bag, and, seizing his friend, hurried him off to the Hythe Bridge, and forced him into a skiff, which was ready prepared for him. Jilks fell flat in the bottom of the boat, and Rookington took the sculls and pulled away for Port Meadow.

"Tim," said Straddle, about eleven o'clock on the night previous to this eventful morning, "has your master given you any note to your mistress?"

"Yees, sur, he have," said Tim; "he looks onkimmon queer, and says I'se to 'liver it if he isn't home to breakfast."

"Well, Tim," said Straddle, "take a glass of grog—and mind you deliver that note directly after chapel—I and your master are going to fight a duel, and I wish Miss Jilks to be present—you understand?"

"I does," said Tim, winking and taking off his tumbler.

"You will find us at Woolvercot Bridge," said Straddle; "take one more glass, and then keep your lips closed till you see your mistress to-morrow morning."

"I 'ool," said Tim, and he did.

Miss Jilks lay dreaming of drunken nephews, agreeable militaires, and comfortable meetings by moonlight, when she was roused by a loud knocking at her bedroom door.

"Here's a letter, mum, for you, from Master Byron Scott Montgomery," said Tim, "it's to be delivered immediately."

Miss Jilks slipped on her dressing-gown, and, opening the door wide enough to admit the letter, took it of Tim, delighted to think that her nephew was so much in haste to make the amende honorable. As soon as she had read it, however, she screamed out—

"Tim! Tim! your master's a murdered man! he's gone out to fight a duel with Mr. Straddle—saddle the horses directly! Tim!—we must prevent bloodshed."

"Where be they a fighting, mum?" asked Tim.

"I don't know—I am sure, Tim—but we must scour the country raise an alarm—rouse the Vice-chancellor and Proctors.—Where do these sanguinary scenes usually take place, Tim? You must know," said Miss Jilks.

"I don't *know*," said Tim; "but I should *think* Port Meadow as likely a spot as any, as it's all open loik, and the cumbatuns can be seen for many miles round."

"Then bring the horses immediately," said Miss Jilks; and by the time Tim brought them, which was not long, as he had them ready saddled by anticipation, his mistress was dressed, and ready to mount. Tim led the way as fast as he could gallop, and they arrived at Woolvercot Bridge just in time to see Byron Scott Montgomery fire his pistol, and fall flat on his face; while Mr. Straddle magnanimously discharged his into the air, without doing any further damage than making Miss Jilks's horses shy, and spill Timothy Thornback into the canal ditch.

Straddle apologized to Miss Jilks for the alarm he had caused her, and assisted her to dismount.

"My dear Mr. Straddle!" cried she, "*you* are not hurt, I trust."

"No, my dearest Violetta—wounded only in the heart by your fair eyes," replied Straddle, giving her a squeeze as he set her on the ground.

"And my ungrateful nephew, Byron Scott Montgomery!" shrieked the aunt.

"All right, aunty," said Jilks, jumping up, and feeling all danger was past, "that infernal pop-gun went off in my hand, and very nearly shot my toe off."

"He was in a funk, madam," said Rookington, looking disgusted at losing the furniture and other effects of the man he hoped to call the *late* Mr. Jilks.

Miss Jilks walked close up to her nephew, and in an audible whisper told him he was a "little cowardly, ungrateful, debauched puppy, and that she would cut him off with a shilling, and marry Mr. Straddle, though she was '*old enough to be his mother.*'"

"Oh, gammon!" said Jilks, and walked off with his friend Rookington across the meadow to their boat, much happier than when he crossed it before on his way to "the ground."

Within a fortnight from that day, Mr. Straddle, who honourably told Miss Jilks of his pecuniary difficulties and expectations, lost every dun, and cut the dons. He and Miss Vi were married at Chellenham, where they still reside, and may be seen "welling it" every morning, arm-in-arm, followed by a large Newfoundland dog and a terrier, nearly as fat as their master and mistress; for, strange to say, the thin Miss Jilks is now the stout Mrs. Straddle, and even encourages her husband to smoke his cigar, while she sips her liqueur and water, and has been known to fumigate her room with a cigar in his absence, instead of a pastil—by mistake of course.

Master Byron Scott Montgomery did *not* get the Newdigate, or his first class, but was rusticated for going drunk to lecture, and *went out to India* to hide his shame. Rookington obligingly ac-

comppanied him, and eloped with his youngest sister soon after his arrival.

Timothy Thornback was enabled, by Straddle's generosity, to take the public he so much longed to get possession of, and over his little bar-table tells a great many stories about Oxford life in general, and his own adventures there in particular.

"There," said Mrs. P., when I had finished reading my MS. to her, Broome, and Dusterly, as they sat over a friendly dish of tea—a *tass doo tay*, as she calls it. "If I was you, Peter, I'd stop at that *mettay fang à voter oovrange*."

"'ow's that hin henglish, mum?" inquired Dusterly, anticipating a tart reply from my wife. I undertook to explain that Mrs. P. was anxious I should cease publishing any more of my "life and times," as she was often alarmed at the risks I ran of being punished for what some people fancied were caricatures of themselves. Dr. Puffs had indeed commenced an action against me, and would have carried it on, if Podagra had not carried him off. Our Bursar, too, was requested by Chops the barber, to look out for another shaver, unless he consented to expel me from the buttery; which it is possible he might have done, had not my attention to him, during a severe illness, brought on by eating too much lamprey, which old Explicator sent him from Worcester, softened his heart towards me. Several other gentlemen, too, who fancy that they are shown up, as Dick Downe, Tom Springer, little Rooke, *cum multis aliis*, look at me with suspicious glances, though they treat me civilly before my face, for fear I *should* paint their likenesses on paper. "Under all circumstances, my dear Mrs. P.," said I, "I think I shall yield to your request. It is possible that at some future period I may resume my pen, and, by writing *anonymously*, record a few of the numerous anecdotes of Oxford life with which my memory is stored, without subjecting you to constant uneasiness on my behalf, or myself to the inconveniences of the *digito monstrari*."

"*Say bong*," said Mrs. P., "and you won't go any more to that horrid Shirt and Shotbag?"

<p>Peter. Broome. Dusterly.</p>	}	<p>"As long as Mr. Rakestraw lives, and bears away 'the Bell' from other publics, and presides as 'most noble grand' at the lodge of Odd Fellows we must attend."</p>
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*Mong dew!*" screamed Mrs. P., *jong swee behangd fashy.*"

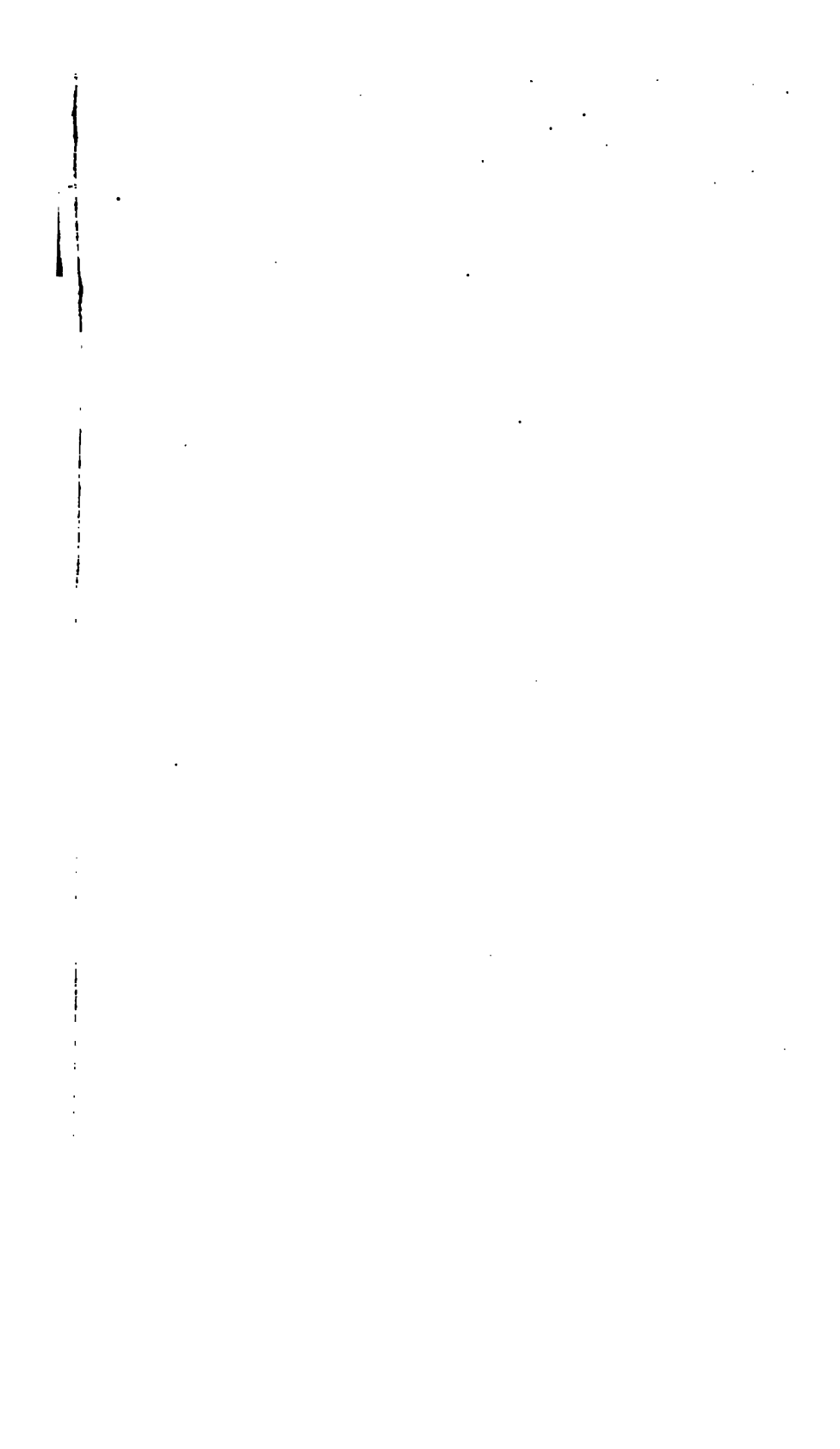
"Now, my dear, three glasses of grog," said I. "Broome and Dusterly, I'll give you a toast—bumpers, and no taps. Here's to the health of all *great* literary characters, from my Lord and my Lady down to the humble College Scout, and to all spirited Publishers and Editors, and, as the phrase goes, 'may a liberal and discerning public appreciate and reward their exertions.'"

*Omnes.* "Hip, hip, hip, hurrah!—guggle, guggle, guggle!—rap, rap, rap!—one cheer more!—hurra! a-a-a-ah!!!"

THE END.









**This book is under no circumstances to be  
taken from the Building**

[illegible]

